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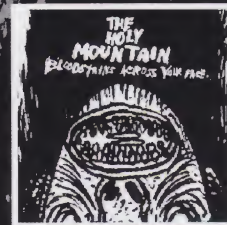
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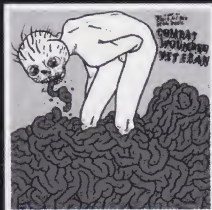
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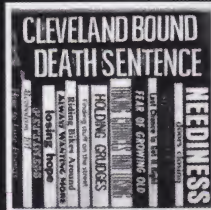
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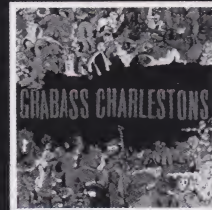
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RAZORCAKE

Stay with me on this. *Razorcake* didn't invent punk rock. *Razorcake* won't kill punk rock. *Razorcake* just wants to give you, the reader, the most honest, well-thought-about articles, interviews, and reviews we can. We just want to keep it going in some small way. Incubate the best new bands, writers, and artists. Honor the lifers and give you something more to think about when the music stops ringing in your ears.

Why? It's because it's fun and music feeds and protects us. Since *Razorcake* doesn't support any one person fully, we all have other lives. "Real" lives that pay bills. We're vending machine stockers, t-shirt printers, school teachers, students, graphic designers, veterinary receptionists, freelance writers, secretaries, video store clerks, and cooks.

We don't live in a bubble. We try to make a bubble—one that didn't exist quite like this before, and that bubble's fragile and it constantly pops. For the past four years, there have always been incredible forces working against us. We have no backers. We have no trust funds. We have only what we make.

Issue #26 marks a slightly new direction for *Razorcake* and if I didn't point it out, it'd probably be hard to see. We've introduced more folks into our fold. We have more people doing layouts and more people taking over the thousand mundane tasks that facilitate the creation of this magazine. We're not re-inventing anything, but we're sure as hell creating something that had never existed before.

I'm thirty-three, I don't have cable television, and own so much music I want to hear that I haven't voluntarily listened to commercial music on the radio in the last decade. I'm absolutely confounded by what's passing itself off as punk rock on corporate stages and in multinationals' labels. I've been so far removed from that part of popular culture for so long, I thought someone was pulling my leg. I saw someone who had the letters "PUNK" in rhinestones on her "designer-ripped" t-shirt, and who sung a song that she wishes was half as catchy as The Carpenters. So what? The head scratcher

is that culture-at-large believed her. This singer usurped the culture that I love while snatching my lexicon in one measly thirty-second sound bite. I mean, it's pretty people singing dull songs. It was all easier to take when they were boy bands, but now they've got gigantic anarchy-emblazoned drum sets while playing tunes The Archies would have snubbed their noses at, yelling "punk!" I'm at a serious loss when well-intending friends ask me what I think about Sum 41. My answer's, "Nothing. I've never thought about them." To me, they're as much as a non-factor as golf on TV. The Svengalis who control these bands have stolen the skin, not the soul.

What's just as sad is when old-timers worm out of the woodwork, pop on the tube or visit their local Barnes and Noble, see the corporate display, and declare that punk music is bankrupt, a shell. I mean, shit, a lot of these people risked getting spit on and stabbed on a regular basis just to see music. Can they be simultaneously that jaded and naïve to believe that when they left, everything just died or everyone involved became millionaires?

And that got me to thinking. I understand that punk is a culture-by-choice and a culture of participation. Punk's not a skin color. Punk's not religious dogma. There is no affirmative action for punk. There's no Punk Anti-Defamation League. There's no punk rock homeland that's getting federal funding. There isn't a ten-block punk rock ghetto in every major city. We're like diffuse atoms, that, when pressurized and collected, can be a force of great strength.

So here it is and here we are; the culture that we love can be kept alive and continue to grow with this constant tension. Only by a healthy respect for one another and dissent of culture-at-large can we continue on our path. We aren't the end-all, be-all. We're just a group of people who believe in punk passionately, even when the word itself has been taken from our tongues and stamped as a temporary tattoo on the belly of some pop stars.

—Todd

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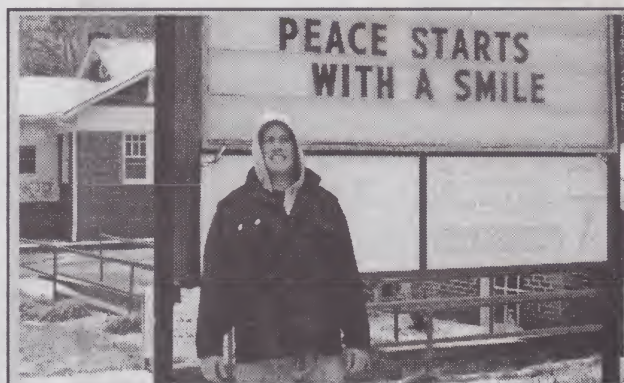
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Thank you list: Smashed-in microphone heads thanks to Niki Pretti and Josh Stein for the *This Is My Fist* photographs; Dude, you're laying on your back and getting stepped on at a hardcore show thanks to Donofthedeath for his Fucked Up pictures; It'd be twice as long as it already is if we printed the fifteen pages about British cars thanks to Julia Smut for her Billy Zoom interview, layout, and pictures; Best tattoo of the year thanks to Sean of the Tim Version for being drunk and scabby and accommodating to picture taking in Vegas; Sweat was coming from the basement's roof like you're standing in a rainforest thanks to Dan Zajackowski for the Chinese Telephones interview, and thanks to Katherine Schumacher for the pics; Kira don't take no shit in the women's bathroom thanks to Ryan Leach for his interview, shiny curtains in the background thanks to Richard Hogge for his pics; "Damn, you made a picture of a bass, and the strings spell Kira" thanks to Amy Adoyzie for her illustrations and laying out Kira's interview; Smoking Virgin Mary thanks to Rob Ruelas for his illustration in Dale's column; Big feet, bright star thanks to Terry Rentzepis for his illustration in LizO's column; The Rhythm Chicken should become America's official diplomat to Poland thanks to Chris Larsen for his illustration in the Chicken's column; Jeff Fox for all of the Pabst and slot car therapy sessions; All of these motherscratchers reviewed records, books, and/or DVDs, some while naked, some while dancing, some while considering suicide or the murder of an entire band for wasting life's precious gift of time: Keith Rosson, Jessica T., Jenny Moncayo, Ty Stranglehold, Aphid Peewit, Speedway Randy, Lord Kveldulfr, Mr. Z, Heela, Donofthedeath, Sean Koepenick, Jimmy Alvarado, Megan Pants, Cuss Baxter, Namella J. Kim, Greg Barbera, Mike Frame, Chris Devlin, Brian Mosher, Amy Adoyzie, and Brian Howe.

Dedication: This issue is dedicated to the memories of Hasil Adkins, Bass Wolf, and Patrick Roe—give 'em hell where ever you are. Rest in peace.



**Toby—Peacemaker. Diplomat,
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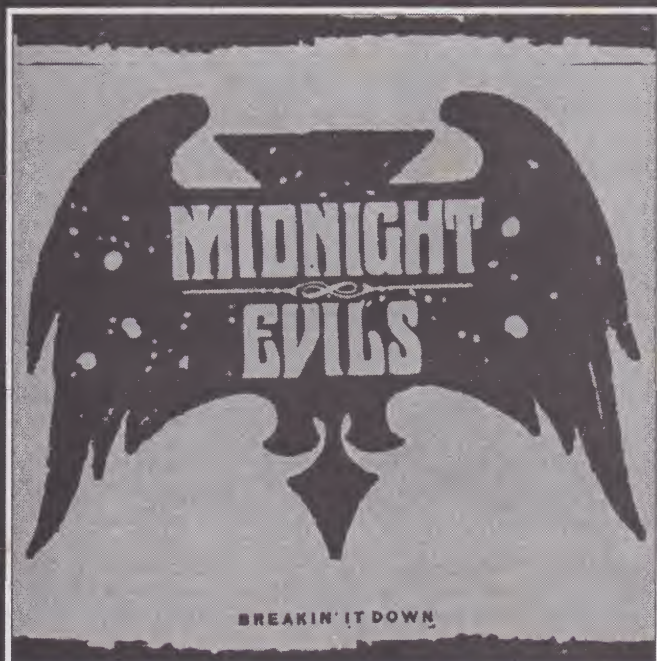
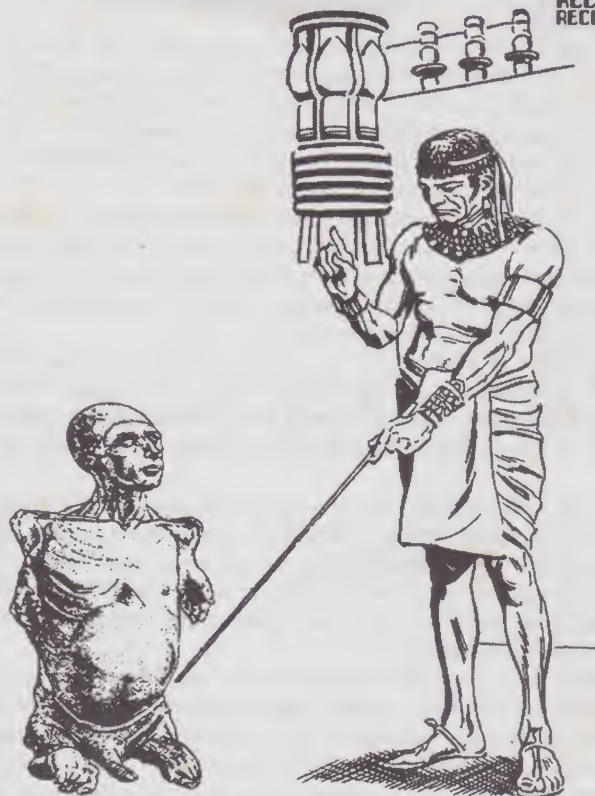
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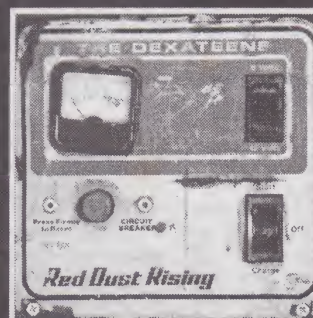
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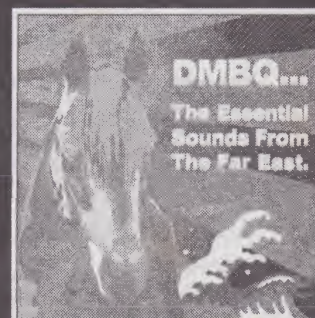
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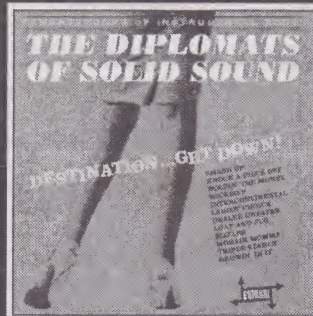
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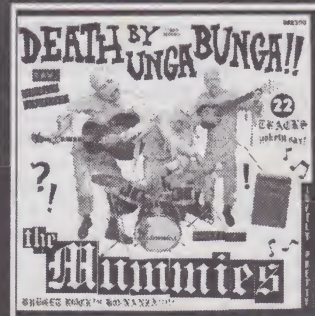
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Individual opinions expressed within are not necessarily those of Razorcake/Gorsky, Inc.

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LIZ O

GUERRILLA MY DREAMS

And then there were hands. Hands raised towards the sky, clapping to testify as asses slapped asses.

Dancefloor Salvation

At 11:00 p.m. inside a spacious split-level club that we used to call the Palace, but must now refer to as Avalon, Michael Mayer begins a three-hour mix of largely instrumental records that can only be filed under the catchall phrase of techno. Some of it is minimal in sound, some of it features the keyboard sweeps and dramatic pauses that one might associate with trance, although those aspects do not overpower the set as can be the case with trance, or even progressive house, sets. His mix, though, is all electronic and all derived from that 4/4 dance rhythm that works like a healer, causing the most socially paralyzed to move, even if it is just an involuntary twitch of the knee. Mayer is co-owner of Kompakt Records, an influential Cologne-based label, and a producer and DJ in his own right. Based solely on his reputation for making, mixing, and supplying quality electronic music, it is safe to say that Mayer could draw a hefty crowd in most major cities. On this dancefloor in Los Angeles, there are three people visibly grooving to the set—two girls in fisherman caps and yours truly.

I am wearing what I jokingly refer to as the Rave Skirt, an ankle-length gray cotton number cut on an A-line. It is one of the few articles of clothing I have encountered that is actually made for dancing, which is probably why I have not tossed it after almost ten years of ever-evolving fashion trends. My feet are clad in twenty-eye Docs because there are only two types of shoes suitable for all-night dancing—Doc Martens and Chuck Taylors. I know that I look like a reject from Lollapalooza 1991 in a city where skin-tight Seven jeans and pointy-toed stiletto heels are what you are supposed to wear to a club, but that doesn't

matter. I'm not here to be seen. I am here only because, in the midst of my first semester of graduate school, my gray matter is beginning to resemble a traffic jam. I need a release. I need to find some semblance of inner peace.

After about an hour, the floor fills, although there are never more than fifty heeding the call of the 4/4. My friend Mat joins me and we move in the platonic non-tango of the way-post-disco crowd. There is about two feet of space that separates us and we rarely stand faced toward each other. Our feet move in the same pattern—step on the kick, touch on the snare. We are together, but not together. We pause only for half-seconds to ask, "Do you know this?" and answer, "No." We are both DJs, but are not so obsessed with trainspotting that we could risk breaking our meditative-like groove. We continue this until our faces are peaked and our shirts sticky with sweat.

Earlier that evening, Mat called and asked if I thought the party would sell out early.

"Mat, we like Michael Mayer. I doubt it will sell out."

On a rare smoking patio break, Carlos, who is my cohort on all dance excursions, and I tell Mat about our Halloween communion with Zombie Nation. Munich-based Zombie Nation earned an international following mostly on the basis of a not-as-good-as-the-original trance remix of his anthemic single "Kernkraft 400." The number spent two or three years as an ubiquitous club fixture, although it might be best known to Los Angeles residents as the five-second song snip played on the occasion that a Dodger slides into homeplate. We arrived at the Key Club early, sat through an excruciating live performance from a local band who shall not be named and watched an exodus of the followers of said local as Zombie Nation embarked on a two-hour cross

between DJ-set and live performance. By night's end, Carlos and I ended up on the DJ's altar, with the ten remaining club goers to dance with Zombie Nation.

Life for dance music disciples in Los Angeles can be lonely, like the plight of punk rock teens in Small Town, U.S.A. This may be the second largest city in the U.S., but DJs generally bypass a stop here in favor of a larger congregation in San Francisco. We may have the biggest record store in the country, but it does not seem to stock up on dance singles until they have been marked off the playlists of forward-minded European DJs for six months. Dance specialty stores never seem to last long and, outside of Saturday night mix shows that range from Oakenfold-trendy to hip yuppie snoozefests, dance radio doesn't exist. For some of us, though, seeking out dance events and finding those records that will serve as gospel becomes something of a vocation.

There is no question that there are probably more parties going on in Los Angeles on a single night than most locations, but going out and going out to dance are two separate things and in Los Angeles, clubs seem to function more as social gatherings than anything else. Los Angeles is an industry town, but unlike other industry towns, business does not end at some union-regulated time. Deals continue well into the evening, which you might notice if you hang around a bar or on the smoking patio long enough to overhear the gossip regarding that new Ian Curtis biopic, someone's recent encounter with Lindsay Lohan, or the local band that was just signed to a major.

Our industry's reliance on appearance is another possible factor in Los Angeles' unwillingness to embrace dance music as others have. Hours of dancing may be good cardio, but it also makes hair

clump together like that of a wet dog and faces redden like a fever victim. Let's not even get into the odor you might emit if you did not take the all-important pre-club shower. Certainly, a night of dancing might ruin any chance you have of being discovered in a nightclub.

Needless to say, people at LA nightclubs look good, very good. Perhaps readers might have had that moment, like I did when I walked into one of Mat's gigs, where there is nothing to say but, "Damn, I feel fat." Even at the "indie" clubs, where I spent a good three years behind the decks, there is that sense of intimidation, an awareness that everything from your weight to your hair and your shoes, even the way you move on the dancefloor, is up for judgement. As a DJ, I spent a lot of time looking down from the booth and noticing the insecurity of the crowd. There was always a sense of apprehension towards being that first person on the dancefloor. Often, I would see a lone dancer run out to the floor in a sign of appreciation for the song played, move with feet too close together and slouched shoulders for no more than ten seconds and then run back to the safety of the bar until that big hit (more often than not, a Smiths song) caused a herd of kids with dyed black hair and thick-framed glasses to stampede towards the stage.

Insecurity persisted even on the most packed dance floors. Sure, there would be the few, like a friend of mine who used to go by the nickname Go Go Box Whore, whose fervent passion for dance could put the paid go go girls to shame. He was a rare type who would dance regardless of whether or not he knew the song, who didn't care if people judged him as he spent four hours on the go go box shaking his ass and waving his arms in the air. Most people chose to move in a conservative fashion, the slight bounce and slide of sock



Illustration by Terry Rentzepis www.alltenthumbs.com

hop scenes in old television shows. In the booth, I could see them glance from side to side as if to ask, "Do I look like an asshole?"

This is not to say that I haven't seen that same fear of looking like an asshole at DJ-oriented events, but it tends to be more common with the DJs who have crossed over with the indie crowd or are more mainstream. Last summer, my friend Karen and I went to see Miss Kittin, who has a large following in Los

Angeles culled primarily from the indie clubs due to the success of several singles recorded with the Hacker, Felix da Housecat and Goldenboy. That night, the Key Club could boast a sold-out crowd and, when Kittin walked onto the stage and held up an L.A. Williams 12" single, that crowd rushed towards her. Despite the fact that the floor was packed, hardly anyone moved. It was as though the majority of the audience was there to see Kittin, not to hear

her, more intrigued by the messenger than the message. This was somewhat disappointing because Kittin is a fantastic DJ, one who can balance the familiar with the obscure without losing any sense of continuity. That message is integral in a place where the constant complaint is that clubs generally follow radio-hit oriented playlists.

Unlike social clubs, dance music events receive little recognition, let alone love, in this metropolis. But the fact that

there is little in the way of an actual scene, be it for techno or house or whatever other genre you want to slap onto the music, makes it more appealing to the person more interested in dancing for catharsis than partying to meet people. Sure, there are the handful of fans that we consistently see at events, but there is not much in the way of cliques lined up against the wall with mediators running back and forth between groups as you might see on a high school campus or inside a social club. In these situations, you can go to a club with a few good friends and not have to worry about making small talk with folks known only by first name and an identifying detail (i.e., "Tall Jen" or "Short Jen"). The eyes of others do not run head-to-toe inspections of anyone who walks out towards the floor. All that exists inside these parties are a few people looking for salvation in the form of a deific mix.

Not too long ago, Carlos and I had stopped by Akbar, a popular Silverlake spot, just to waste some time before heading over to another event that we were only attending out of obligation. In the bar's backroom was Dirty Dirty House Club, which, as its name would imply, is a venue for house music of the deep and sultry variety. Inside, a large pack of men hovering between the ages of thirty and forty were grinding as a DJ by the name of Tony Powell played like the preacherman whose sermons have marked one club hit after another. His rhythm mimicked the intonation of the orator inside a Pentecostal revival tent and the pauses synchronized with the drop of the lights so that the club remained as still as Lazarus until the beat resurrected. After midnight came and went, the crowd hit the apex of soul-soaring ecstasy. Vocals raced towards God as only a gospel choir urging the flock to "shake your thing" could. And then there were hands. Hands raised towards the sky, clapping to testify as asses slapped asses. I thought for a moment that even Carlos would begin to jump like a cripple arisen from his wheelchair, but he merely headbopped with approval. A chubby man in a muscle tee grabbed me by the hand and spun me. I could hear roars from the crowd, could feel the fits of neighboring dancers. Here on the dancefloor was the rapture and those who could not embrace the spirit of house were left for tribulation. Anything that happened after that point was irrelevant. Our souls had been saved by a 4/4 time signature.

—Liz O.

Portions of this essay previously appeared on the writer's blog, <http://msgolightly.diaryland.com>

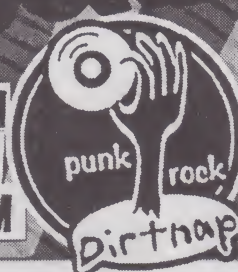
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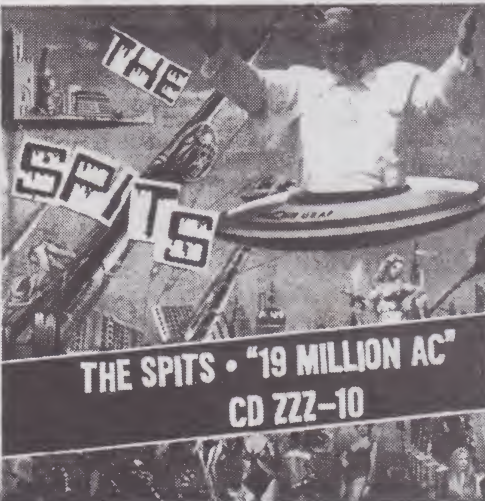
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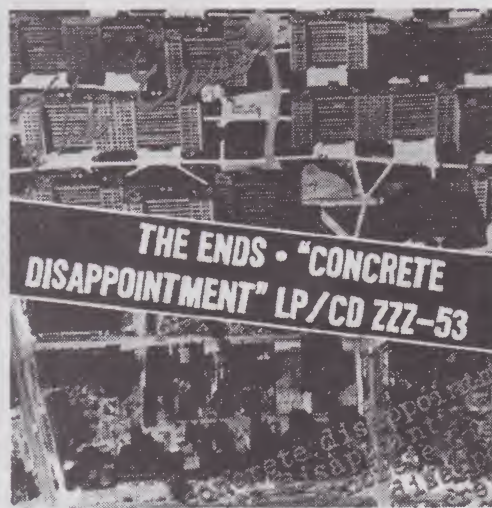
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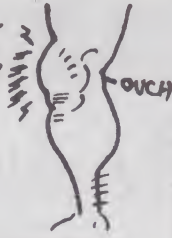
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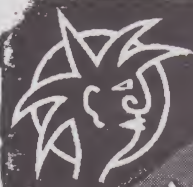
WE GOTTA TALK
LOVER BOY!

Goo... GAA...
URP!



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SEAN CARSWELL

A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

ROCKING THE WHITEWASH

Randy Williams and I cut across the football field on the way to the brawl. Randy was gonna fight and most likely gonna lose. I wasn't fighting at all. I planned on sticking to the school-side of the fence and watching. Not jumping in to help Randy or to break things up. Just watching.

Three or four times a year, the white kids and black kids in my junior high would go just outside school grounds and fight. It was serious shit. This was the early eighties, so there weren't really gangs or guns, but a lot of high school kids would come down to fight. Some of them would bring chains or crowbars or things like that. I know that, before school, Randy had brought two rolls of quarters because his dad told him to hold a roll in each hand and it would add a little to each of his punches. Randy showed me before school. His twelve-year-old fist barely wrapped around the roll of quarters. I looked at the bottom of the roll sticking out from his fist and thought, that shit's gonna bust open and all Randy's gonna do is lose ten bucks.

Different things would trigger the fight, but the tension was always there, simmering just below the surface of everyone at Edgewood Junior High, just waiting to boil over. This time, two kids had gotten in a fight on the second floor of school, between A-wing and B-wing. The black kid had gotten low, picked up the white kid, and bullied him over the second floor railing. The white kid fell down, hit the ground, jumped up, and was back on the second floor, fighting again before anyone could come in and break it up.

So the white kids weren't gonna stand for it. A brawl was on for the next Wednesday. Gossip buzzed around school. Matt Phaneuf kept singing, "A fight, a fight, a nigger and a white." But only when there were no black kids around. Everyone knew about the brawl. And it wasn't like the community exactly sanctioned it, but they had to know about it and they damn sure didn't do anything to stop it. A lot of fathers, like Randy's, even gave pointers to their kids. Even the cops, who seemed to know where every high school party was on a Saturday night and would show up to bust the party, always got to Edgewood about twenty minutes after the fight had started.

I'd watched the last brawl, but decided I'd fight in the next one because, since the beginning of the semester, Hurlie Brown had been hitting me in gym class. Not everyday or anything, but it had happened a few times. I'd be at my locker changing out of my gym clothes and Hurlie would sneak up behind me and smack me in the back of the head. Hurlie was a couple of years older than me and way bigger than me.

RAZORCAKE The difference between twelve

years old and fourteen is a big one. So I knew I wouldn't stand a chance fighting against Hurlie in the locker room, but if I went to the brawl, I could sneak up behind Hurlie and get in a few punches—even things up—and clear out before he could do too much back to me. I thought, maybe if I could get one good punch to his head, the kind that makes his ears ring, he'd leave me alone.

Actually, though, it was Randy who convinced me not to fight.

About two weeks earlier, I'd had a date with a girl named Kaylee. She was blond and skinny. Not really popular or any prettier than any other girl in junior high, but she was blond and skinny and I guess that's all I was really asking for at the time. I took Kaylee to the mall on a Friday night. That's what we did. All the kids from junior high would hang out at the mall and play video games in the Nautilus Arcade or get four pictures for fifty cents in the McCrory's photo booth, or just wander around, hoping to find other kids from school. Boring stuff like that.

Kaylee stood by my side while I lost two bucks worth of quarters playing Frogger. I offered some quarters to her to play whatever she wanted, but there was a line at the Ms. Pac Man game—all the girls wanted to play it—and she didn't know how to play any other game. We took a little stroll around the mall. Somewhere around Athletic Attic, Kaylee grabbed my hand. I felt an erection coming on, so I said, "Let's sit down on this bench here."

She and I sat down. There was a big wad of gum on the mall floor in front of us. Kaylee looked at the bottom of her sneaker to make sure she didn't step in it. She didn't. I said, "When I was a little kid, my brother and I used to get a pack of Big League Chew and chew big gobs of gum and spit them out on the floor. Then, we'd sit here and wait for someone to step in it."

"What would you do when they stepped in it?"

"Laugh."

"That's awful," Kaylee said.

"I know," I said. I looked at the floor and up the mall in one direction and down the mall in the other direction. Kaylee sat with her hands folded in her lap, not saying anything. I said, "Wanna get some Big League Chew?"

"Yeah," she said.

Before we could get up, her brother, Eric, walked up to us. He patted Kaylee on the top of her head and said to me, "Dude, Randy Williams is here."

"So?" I said, because I liked Randy and all, but I was in the middle of a date here.

"I think he wants to fight you."

This didn't make any sense to me. I'd just seen Randy in Ms. Shattuck's class earlier that day, and everything was cool. He'd helped me

with diagramming sentences. We got along just fine. "Why do you say that?" I asked.

"He's going around telling everyone you're the whitewash king," Eric said.

"What?"

"Yeah. He says he was out at the beach and he saw you surfing. Said all you did was ride in the whitewash. You're the whitewash king."

I looked at Kaylee. She raised her eyebrows and her eyes were kinda big, like either she was concerned for me or pitying me because I couldn't surf well and Randy was making fun of me for it. In front of everyone. So I said the only thing I could think of to say. I said, "Tell Randy that if he says it one more time, I'm gonna kick his ass."

And that was it. Within fifteen minutes, Eric had told everyone that I was gonna kick Randy's ass for calling me the whitewash king. Randy, I guess, kept saying that he didn't even know what the fuck anyone was talking about but he'd fight me anyway, if that's what I wanted. I wasn't saying anything. I just figured that I couldn't back down because everyone was expecting me to fight. I'd look like a pussy and never get a second date with Kaylee if I didn't fight Randy. So, finally, I met him in front of the Nautilus. He was standing there with a handful of his friends behind him, just in case, I guess. And a bunch of kids were behind me, too, but I didn't think they'd jump in for me.

I walked up to him and said, "Randy."

Randy didn't say anything. He just nodded.

I didn't really know how to go about this fight. I'd been in a bunch of fights, but only the kind that start spontaneously. Not all artificial and planned like this. So I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to throw the first punch, because it's cheap. And I wasn't really mad at Randy. I mean, that whitewash king shit bothered me because I'd been out surfing that summer, just learning to surf. I'd just bought my first surfboard right after sixth grade was over. It was yellow. I got it for twenty bucks from one of my neighbors. I'd had to mow four lawns to pay for it. I thought it was cool, but the better surfers teased me for having a yellow board. And I didn't have anyone to teach me, so I just did my best. I learned to stand pretty quickly, but I didn't realize that there were two parts to the wave: the face and the whitewash. And you were supposed to surf the face. Only kooks surfed the whitewash. After I spent two months rocking the whitewash, one of the better surfers at Third Street South told me what a kook thing I was doing. Actually, he didn't tell me. He just made fun of me in front of a bunch of people until I realized what the hell he was talking about.

So it bugged me that Randy would say the same thing about me. I thought Randy and I were friends. He taught me how to diagram sentences and all. I said to him,

"You been talking shit about me?"

"I didn't say a thing," Randy said.

"That's not what I heard." I was stalling. Sure. It was getting tougher, though, because Eric and Matt Phaneuf were behind me yelling things like, "Just fight already," and "Smack that nigger across the teeth." When Matt said "nigger," I could see it in Randy's eyes. We were gonna fight.

Kaylee jumped in at this point. She stuck her little blond body right between Randy and me

So I don't know what it was about that stare down with Randy, but it convinced me not to fight in the brawl. Besides, the kids who fought in the brawl were great fighters. I came from a neighborhood where you had to be a good fighter. You had to know how to throw a punch and take a hit. You learned pretty early what it felt like to get hit in the head. But these guys, with their chains and their crowbars and their pickups, they came from neighborhoods where you had to be a great fighter. Where you got your

thirty kids lined up to fight.

"You really should stay out of this, Randy," I said.

"Nah," Randy said. "I had enough with these cocksuckers." Randy climbed the fence on the edge of the schoolyard and walked out onto Warner Way. He took off his shirt and stood next to Shone and Hurlie. I lined up on the fence next to Eric and Matt. Matt was singing his song again. "A fight. A fight. A nigger and a white." Only it wasn't a fight. It was a brawl. And I did-

ILLUSTRATION BY FELIZON YIDAD



THEY CAME FROM NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE YOU HAD TO BE A GREAT FIGHTER...
WHERE YOU GOT MORE LOVE IN FIGHTS THAN ANYWHERE ELSE.

and said, "Randy, what's a whitewash king?"

Randy didn't look at her. "I don't know," he said.

"Then why'd you call me that?" I said.

"He didn't," Kaylee said. "Did you?"

Randy shook his head.

Kaylee looked behind me. "Eric, you started all this, didn't you?" She grabbed me by the hand and yanked me. "Come on," she said. "We're getting out of here." She looked one more time at Randy. "Put your arms down," she said. "No one's fighting."

I let Kaylee pull me away because I was saving face and not fighting, and that was cool with me. Randy didn't chase me because he didn't care. And the next Monday in Ms. Shattuck's class, Randy and I laughed about it all.

"I thought they were saying I called you a honkey or something," Randy said.

first closed-fist punch in the head from your dad. If you even had a dad. Where you got more love in fights than anywhere else. These guys lived for this shit. I had no business in the mix with them. Neither did Randy, with his sorry little roll of quarters.

As we got closer, I started to recognize the white kids. Tommy Stampley, who was easily twenty years old and used to torment me when I was a little kid, had his shirt off and twirled a sawed-off broom handle. Scott Hodgins, who was in high school, kept hitting Keith Anderson's shoulders like football players do when they're trying to get psyched up. On the black kids' side, Hurlie Brown was doing push-ups and Shone McDowell just stood there, arms at his side, staring and glaring like a pit bull who wasn't gonna bark, who was just gonna sit there and wait until it was time to fuck you up.

All total, there were about twenty-five or

n't know how I felt about it. I kinda wanted everyone to lose except for Randy. And I kinda wanted Randy to lose, too, for jumping that fence and joining in. And I couldn't see myself rooting for Tommy Stampley and Scott Hodgins and Keith Anderson, because they were all assholes to me, but Hurlie and Shone were no better, and really, fuck 'em all for fighting. And I thought about turning and leaving, but I didn't. I just stood there and watched until the cops showed up, twenty minutes late.

-Sean Carswell



ENDNOTE: Gorsky Press just published a collection of short stories written by me. It's called Barney's Crew. You can get it at your local bookstore or at either <www.gorskypress.com> or <www.razorcake.com>. If you like my stories, please buy my book.

RAZORCAKE 9

SEAN CARSWELL



JIM RULAND

LAZY MICK

During the question and answer session he advised one of our friends to pay for his rehab with a bad check.

WWTD?

There I was at the bar at Los Angeles International Airport on St. Patrick's Day watching the NCAA men's basketball tournament while waiting for my flight to Las Vegas, and this filthy crone behind the bar with a thick German accent and a face like a howler monkey wants to know if I want a shot with my beer.

"How much?"

"Two dollars."

I look at the shelf behind the bar: Maker's Mark, Courvoisier, Cuervo 1800. Shitty liquors made famous by dint of massive ad campaigns and rackets like this one. My brain hasn't been working all that well since late February when I got the news that a great light had gone out, and by great light I mean a ten-thousand-volt bug zapper that could take out a Cessna.

Hunter S. Thompson was dead, killed by his own hand, off on a final trip to see the Great Gonzo in the sky.

The late great Raoul Duke has occupied a special place in my heart ever since I went to see him speak in San Diego at one of his Super Bowl seminars during the late '80s. I was a huge fan of his books and the guy who turned me on to him rounded up some of his friends from the desert: one of them had just been laid off, the other was recently sprung from rehab. We all took a bunch of acid because that's what we thought we were supposed to do. I never saw such a collection of freaks in my life. One dude, in an homage to an early scene in the *Curse of Lono*, had dyed his arm blue.

Thompson drank whiskey throughout his lecture but was on point the entire time. During the question and answer session he advised one of our friends to pay for his rehab with a bad check. The instigator of our party had wrangled his way to the killing floor and stood right at Thompson's feet. When someone asked him if Bill Murray had done a good job of portraying him in *Where the Buffalo Roam*, which is superior in every respect to the Johnny Depp version of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, Hunter was at a loss for words. My friend called out, "He's an actor," as if to say, actors act, here's the real deal. Whatever it was, they communicated. Thompson invited him up on stage and poured him a glass of whiskey, while the rest of us wondered if this was actually happening or if we were still in a trailer in the desert experimenting with acid and drinking ourselves into oblivion.

Brunnhilda drums her fingers on the bar. I detect a feral glint in her eyes

behind her steel rim glasses. She's probably Himmler's daughter, a death camp love child. I ask myself, What would Thompson do in this situation?

"Ein bourbon, bitte."

Thus began a depraved descent into March Madness.

It seemed like an innocent enough trip at the time. I was meeting my brother and my sister in Las Vegas for a little bit of family fun. Watch some basketball. Sample some buffets. Maybe do a little gambling. No dangerous drugs. No belt fights or knife throwing. Nothing heavy with a capital H.

Plus, my brother and I had serious work to do. We'd traveled to Las Vegas to participate in the National Fantasy Baseball Championships: a high-stakes competition. It costs \$1,250 for a seat at the table and a shot at \$5,000 if you win your league and \$100,000 if you win the whole thing. Last year we'd won our league and came in 7th overall. Out of the money, but high enough to score a free play in this year's challenge.

We liked our chances and took our mission seriously. Our competition was not impressive. Imagine three hundred baseball geeks packed into a conference room at the Rio with laptops and spreadsheets. Middle-aged men with pale skin and creeping bloat. Bad eyes and guts full of gas. These guys were happy to be away from their wives and their thoughts were never more than two seconds away from the high-class poon they'd gotten a whiff of the night before at Spearmint Rhino. And Meatloaf. Yes, that Meatloaf was there, too.

We didn't just come to win, we came to destroy these sad fuckers. As Doctor Gonzo says to Raoul Duke in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, "The important thing is to stay focused on the job."

That would prove easier said than done.

Back at the Gordon Birsch Bar at LAX, I had two more rounds and cheered my team to victory. My brother had put some money down for me, and I needed these inbred gym rodents to come through if I was going to break even, win the day, and I suddenly found myself Extremely Interested in the fate of some team from a shit-kicked school in the middle of bluegrass country where *Hee-Haw* DVDs outsell newspaper subscriptions, and when it became clear the ass-clown next to me was pulling for the other team because of some bush league office pool, I became Deadly Serious about the game.

Don't get me wrong. I love the men's col-

lege basketball tournament. It's the last pure sport, and by pure I mean it's one of the few places left on television where you can watch dreams die live and unfiltered. You can see the terror in the eyes of these noodle-brained jerks when they step up to the free throw line with four seconds on the clock and the game extremely close. When they inevitably choke and clang a shot off the front of the rim and try to muscle the lump in their throat down their esophagus so they don't start bawling on national television, you just know they were beaten by their fathers and screamed at by their coaches and generally terrorized until they learned to stroke the ball with consistency. Then, of course, the love came pouring in from all sides, and everything was great. Until, that is, that errant free throw, and the dream disintegrates before their eyes, and all they have left to look forward to is a lifetime of avoiding AM radio because five, ten, twenty years from now some unbalanced kook will still be urging the poor kid to kill himself.

But if the shot goes in? Team Slurpees. Blowjob galore. Daddy's unconditional love and my undying gratitude because there's nothing worse than starting a trip to Vegas in the hole.

I board my plane, order a Bailey's and coffee to reassure the flight attendants that there is at least one civilized passenger on this plane packed with human swine, this open sewer of the skies. I hunker down with my data to plan my bets for the next day. This is good old-fashioned clipboard and calculator work. I consider overall record, record over last ten games, strength of schedule, injuries, and good old Gut Feelings.

"Some game," the guy sitting next to me says.

I am a patient person, but I do not abide idle chitchat on airplanes. What most people don't realize is that conversations on planes are not motivated by nosiness or neighborliness, but Fear. These conversations are initiated by people who are so afraid of air travel that they will start chattering like defibrillated epileptics and say anything that pops into their heads in order to avoid the Fear.

Don't be bitten.

Years ago, my cousin, who travels a lot, told me what to say to these simple-minded feebs that is 100% guaranteed to shut them up, and now I will tell you:

"I'm sorry, but I'm not a people person."

Polite and to-the-point. The person might get upset, but if they do, simply summon the

flight attendant, accuse the fucker of molesting you in your sleep, and let the air marshals take care of the rest.

The plane landed, my work was done, and I felt reasonably sober, like a responsible citizen, and there is no more terrible feeling on St. Patrick's Day. I took a cab to the casino. It was time to commune with my Irish ancestors, pronto.

At the hotel I met up with my brother and sister. We blasted The Tossers via portable speakers and an MP3 player the size of a wristwatch and cracked open a bottle of Scotch.

"Slainte!"

"Here's to swimming with bow-legged women!"

"Fuck your mother!"

around eleven o'clock *the following morning*.

I don't know what happened. The place was packed when we got there. It was three deep at the bar and we bought our drinks two at a time. We clinked our glasses together and went to work. Some bands played but I don't know who they are. I didn't forget; I never knew. At some point we decided it was a good idea to accept the cute-but-Aryan-looking blonde's offer for some Charlie, but when she delivered it, it wasn't Charlie, it was something considerably less, something evil, but we did it anyway. It seemed like a fitting way to celebrate a day devoted to the son of an English nobleman who was captured by Irish slavers, clapped in chains, and forced to spend his days herding swine and having hallucinatory conversations with an angel named Victor.

room cursing at the television as team after team shit the bed and either lost or failed to cover the spread.

This is the true meaning of March Madness.

I may have lost eight straight bets on the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament and twelve hours in the Double Down Saloon, but at least I knew that Barry Bonds was on the fucking disabled list, which is more than I can say for the suffering bastard in our league at the draft who burned his second round pick, the eighteenth overall, on the monstrosity from San Francisco, which allowed us to score the steal of the draft. Everyone makes mistakes, and Las Vegas has a way of magnifying them. Nobody wins the grand prize on draft day, but there sure are a lot of ways to lose it.

They hate people
from out of
town, especially
if from L.A.,
and if you so
much as blink
they'll pounce
on you with
spiked bats and
machetes and
leave you naked
by the dumpsters
behind a gay
disco.



Ancient Irish toasts all.

We went down to the bar for a few rounds. My brother was tired, but my sister was up for an excursion outside the casino, and I suggested the Double Down Saloon. She nodded, but was slightly afraid. She'd never been to the Double Down before, but she sensed right away that infamy lay right around the corner.

If you've never been to the Double Down Saloon, keep it that way. It's an awful place full of pickpockets, queers, and rum-guzzling tuberculosis patients. They hate people from out of town, especially if from L.A., and if you so much as blink they'll pounce on you with spiked bats and machetes and leave you naked by the dumpsters behind a gay disco. It defies description. As Hunter says, "The details don't matter. All you know, for sure, is that your brain starts humming with brutal vibes as you approach the front door. Something wild and evil is about to happen; and it's going to involve *you*."

We went to the Double Down Saloon around ten o'clock to celebrate St. Patrick's Day and left

At one point near the following transaction took place:

Me: Toomah pnra gaanaah... (Two more pints of Guinness)

Bartender: If you can't say it, you can't have it.

Me: Two Buds.

Incredibly, he served me.

Equally incredible, the bar stayed crowded throughout the night, long into the small hours, and through the morning. The Double Down Saloon is popular with servers and bartenders at other establishments who come to the Double Down to "unwind" when their shifts are over. If I got any more unwound, I was going to puke up my intestines.

Sometime after eleven and before noon, we bid adieu to that stinking saloon full of rapists and grave robbers, braved the hideous sun, took a taxi back to the hotel, and slept. Or tried to anyway.

I wasn't feeling very much like Hunter S. Thompson. I was feeling more like St. Patrick waling up on an Irish slave boat. I stayed in my

Knowledge is king at the National Fantasy Baseball Championship draft. However, no matter how much you prepare, you can't predict what other people will do, what Admiral Byrd calls "the randomness of events" and my brother calls "the ass-clown factor." But whether we come in first or last makes no difference to me. Thompson has taught me there is no shame in making a spectacle of yourself as long as story comes out of it. Who is the happier man: he who makes an ass out of himself in public and has fun doing it, or he who makes a secret of his sins? Thompson wasn't interested in aphorisms like "to thine own self be true;" rather, his worldview reflected the belief that no matter how fucked up you are, the rest of the world is at least as filthy, dirty, greasy, dangerous, spastic, savage, and as weird as you are.

There's comfort in that.

Stay weird.

—Jim Ruland

JIM RULAND





Hot Legs

When our dust-covered truck arrived at the Angel's Camp parking lot, it was splattered with bugs. We got out and surveyed the carnage of our windshield and grill—large green smears, tiny obliterated fly bodies covering every surface of the front end. The hood had actual texture, like a relief map of insect bodies and legs. It looked like fricken' Vietnam.

I put some dandelions on the hood and my boy and I walked to the front gate of the fair—to the annual Jumping Frog Jubilee festival of Calaveras County. Walking past car after speck-

led car, it occurred to me—of course there were lots of bugs. What did you expect when nearly two thousand of the local frogs had been captured for the frog-jumping contest? There's going to be flies. There's always a price to pay.

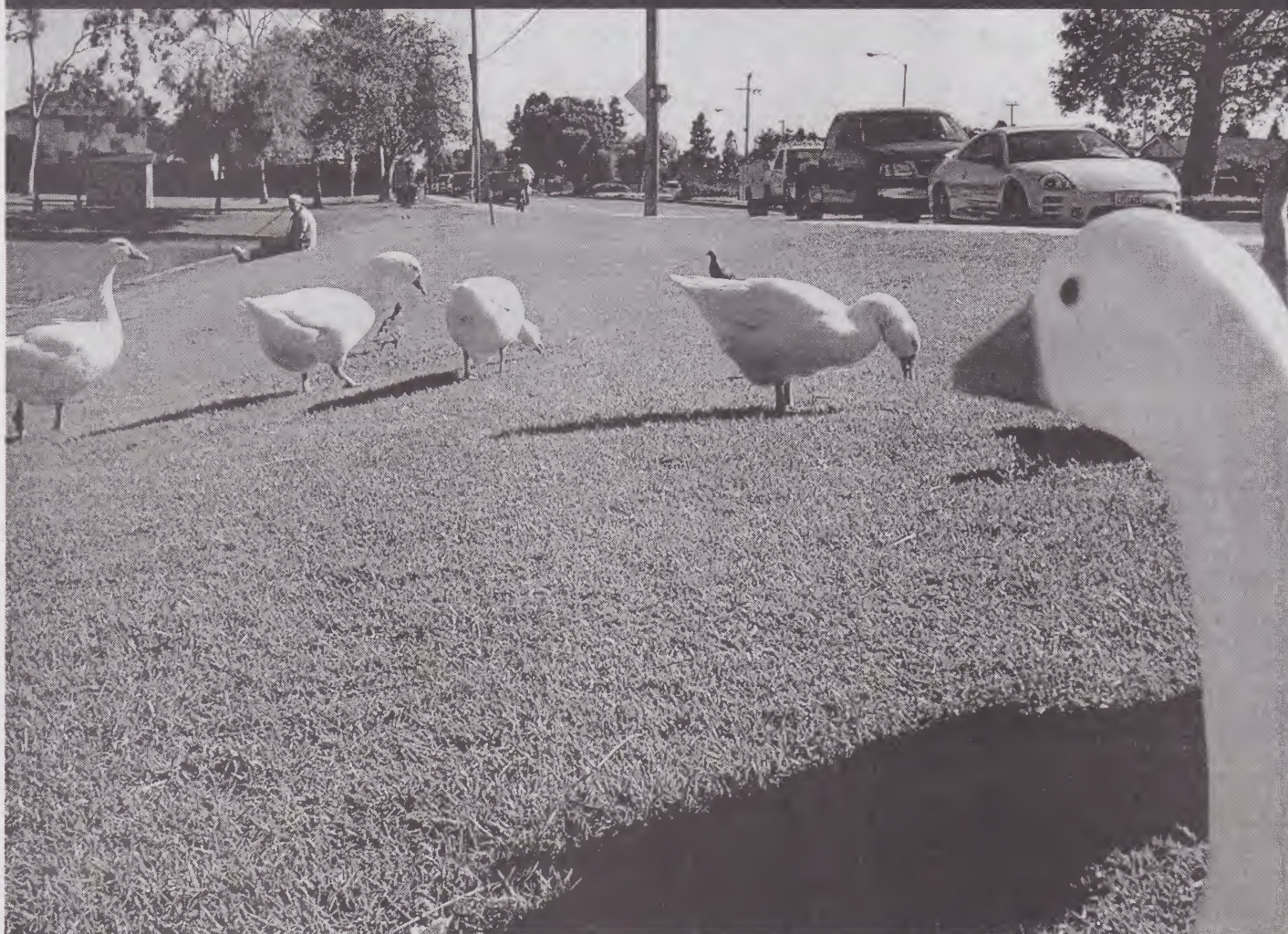
We walked through the small gate to see a hillside of bikers, locals, tourists and a handful of heartily laughing yuppies holding plastic Jumping Frog Jubilee cups of beer. A fat man in a black T-shirt and leather trousers held a cup of beer in one hand, waving a bull frog around in the other, and I had another thought—maybe alcohol and frogs were a bad combination.

Around us, vendors were selling every meat product imaginable except, of course, frog legs,

which would be against the spirit of the contest. There was every frog-themed product you could dream up as well: frog ball caps for the kids, green felt costumes for the babies. Think you'd never see a frog-shaped popsicle? Think again.

In the original Mark Twain story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," a bragging, local gambler named Jim Smiley bets a traveling visitor that his frog Dan'l Webster is so strong it can out jump any other frog in Calaveras County. The stranger takes him on, but doesn't have a frog to compete with. So Jim Smiley goes down to the swamp to get him one. While Mr. Smiley's gone, fishing out a contender from the murky water, the stranger

It was time to head back to our place, the Jumping Frog Motel, where some of the few amenities listed were "corkscrew" and "shower."



puts a spoonful of buckshot in the prizewinning frog's mouth. Needless to say, this slows him down immensely and come jumping time, Mr. Dan'l Webster the frog just sits there like a lump of clay. Jim loses the contest and his cash. By the time he discovers the buckshot ("He 'pears to be mighty baggy, somehow") and realizes his fat, lifeless frog is full of dead weight, the stranger is long gone with the money. Moral of the story? Lock up your frogs. No one is to be trusted!

green legs spread. The crowd sighed as she landed. Her handler scooped her up and dropped her sadly back into her pail. One by one, each amphibious champion took the stage, some making a wild break for the edge after the initial qualifying jump. Freedom, so close!

People leapt up and started yelling at the frogs. There was a fist or two in the air. Behind us some locals started whispering about rumors of foul play—the possibility of speed injections

voted to skip the "Angel Murphy's Rotary Crab Feed," though I'm sure it was our loss. The only non-frog activity we checked out was the demolition derby. It happened at the end of the night where fluorescent, flamed, and checkered cars all crashed vehemently into one another, leaving heaps of twisted metal around the dirt track. The Dukes of Hazzard have nothing on the souped-up dragsters of Calaveras County.

At the end of the day, all the frogs are round-

A fat man in a black T-shirt and leather trousers held a cup of beer in one hand, waving a bull frog around in the other, and I had another thought—maybe alcohol and frogs were a bad combination.

I wondered if such trickery and foul play would surface today. After all, the cash prize for winning the jumping contest was \$5,000. That would buy a lot of buckshot.

We wandered around and took a seat in the bleachers. Soon, the first round of the contest began. A fat, leggy specimen was pulled from a white bucket. "Hot Legs is up first," the announcer cried out, "and boy does she have a long set of jumpers." My guy and I looked at each other. We said it simultaneously: "Hot Legs?"

The owner stroked her long, fat legs and set her down, pounding his flat palms against the stage. Above the line of pails was a yellow banner listing the all-time jumping champion: *Rosie the Ribbiter*: 1986. 21 feet. 5 3/4 inches. Twenty-one feet!

Hot Legs fell short of the challenge, but she gave it a hearty leap. She sailed through the air,

and steroids. Frog gossip. The rumors were coming to life. The modern day equivalent of the ole buckshot-down-the-gullet scam. Except it's all chemicals and methamphetamines these days, to give them an edge. To make them Olympic frog athletes. Champions! Crystal meth trumps Darwin, and sure as hell, it's harder to detect than a fat, sagging frog.

In front of us some young guys in western shirts started bouncing ideas around about the possibility of "extreme frogging"—hurling the frogs from planes with tiny parachutes and measuring the hopping distance after landing. Bungee hopping. Water-skiing frogs. I slapped another bug off my arm. How about an extreme fly-eating contest? There were just so, so many.

There were some other "exciting" sounding competitions and events going on during the fair, like the "Rabbit Show" and "Fishing Seminar." After long, bitter deliberation, we

ed up and handed over to the coordinators of the festival to be released back into their natural habitat. And to rid us of some damn flies. The Jubilee cups would soon be carted away, where they'll sit quietly in a landfill somewhere well into the next century of frog leaping.

It was time to head back to our place, the Jumping Frog Motel, where some of the few amenities listed were "corkscrew" and "shower." When it was time to head to the car my boy looked at me. He lovingly picked a mosquito out of my hair and said, "Hey, Hot Legs." Only we knew what he meant.

—Ayn Imperato

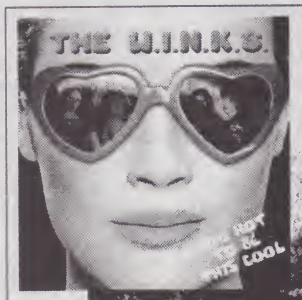
This year's Frog Jubilee takes place at Angel's Camp, CA between May 19-22. Visit <www.frogstown.org> for more info.

AYN IMPERATO

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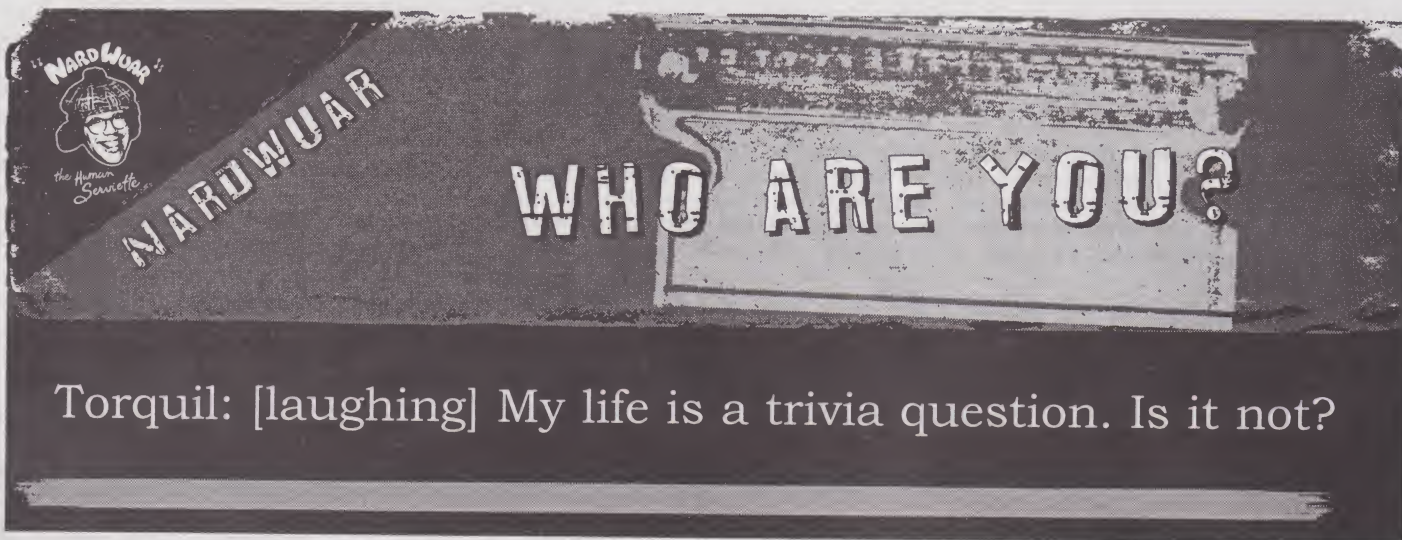


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Nardwuar the Human Serviette vs. Stars

Here is an interview I did live on CiTR Radio FM 101.9 Vancouver, BC, Canada with Torquil Campbell from Montreal's STARS.

Nardwuar: Who are you, Torq? Please, could you explain? Who are you, and who else is in Stars?

Torquil: I'm just a dude from Montreal. And I'm in a band called Stars with my friends Amy and Chris and Evan and Pat. And, uh, we make lover's rock.

Nardwuar: And you're coming to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada—actually, I saw a reference to "Lover's Rock," y'know, The Clash song "Lover's Rock"?

Torquil: Sure, I love it. Yes.

Nardwuar: I love that tune—I saw a reference to it being the "weak link" on *London Calling*.

Torquil: Really?!

Nardwuar: Yeah, the weak link, I love that tune! I love—

Torquil: Who wrote—who wrote that?!

Nardwuar: I'm not sure. It was like a blow-by-blow description of—it might have actually been in *Uncut* magazine or something like that.

Torquil: Oh well, what do they know?

Nardwuar: And you do have an appreciation of the past, don't you there Torq, of the Stars?

Torquil: I do! I love the past. The past seems better than what we're experiencing now—it probably wasn't, but it seems that way.

Nardwuar: And you're coming to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, speaking of the future, next Friday night. Did you hear a little bit of that music that I was playing before you came on?

Torquil: I did, yeah, what was that?

Nardwuar: That, believe it or not, was a band called the Jaybees.

Torquil: The J.B.—not, like, the J.B. Horns?

Nardwuar: No, the Jaybees, who used to be called J.B. and the Playb...

Torquil: The Playboys! Oh, Nardwuar! You always know, don't you?

Nardwuar: I'm trying to do a little connection here with the Stars, because...

Torquil: You're an omniscient and omnipotent character.

Nardwuar: Well, first, could you please explain to the people, Torq, what is the connection between the band I played, J.B. and the Playboys, and your band the Stars—because I think this is incredible.

Torquil: Well, we were sitting in a bar one night, in North Hatley in Quebec, which is a little village outside Montreal where my family has a little cottage, and we were sitting in the bar watching the World Series. It was the fall. And there was a guy sitting there, I said, "That guy, I bet he's in the music business." So we got talking to him and it turns out he was: his name was Allan Nicholls and he writes music for Robert Altman movies and he's a first ASM (music supervisor) on films and stuff like that. And he ended up offering us his house to hang out in, to make this record, 'cause he had just built a studio. Allan Nicholls was once the lead singer of J.B. and the Playboys.

Nardwuar: Who turned into The Jaybees, who did that tune "I'm a Loner"—which is really amazing because he kind of shares some parallels with you. Because he didn't just do the music, he also did the movies and you're into the movies too, aren't you, Torq of the Stars?

Torquil: I am. Maybe one day I'll own a house. Wouldn't that be nice?

Nardwuar: Now, just a little bit more about your producer. Is he the producer, or did he just lend you the

house?

Torquil: No, he just lent us the house. He wasn't even there. He was down south doing something else. He was just the guy we met and had some beers with, who got along with us and he was kind enough to give us his beautiful house.

Nardwuar: What exactly is his life story? I mean just quickly, because he now works with Robert Altman. Like I said, you were involved in films and stuff, and now he's involved with Robert Altman, and he was involved in a cool '60s band, and you're involved in a cool 21st Century band. How did J.B. and the Playboys end up in Robert Altman films? What was the connection?

Torquil: He's had a crazy life. I think what happened after he did J.B. and the Playboys was that he got into *Hair*. He was in the original cast of *Hair* on Broadway. And he did a bunch of, like, rock 'n' roll revue shows, y'know, and stuff like that. There was a poster of him in the studio that he built, like arm-in-arm with John Lennon. I think he did a Beatles tribute kind of thing for a long time. That was a big hit. *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* kinda thing, but on the road, y'know? And so I guess maybe he met Hollywood people through that, I guess. And he met some film people and Altman took a shine to him. If somebody's listening to the radio, y'know, and there's music in the background; he writes the incidental music in the movies.

Nardwuar: And we're speaking here to Torq, from the band Stars. Your bass player, your bass player, Torq.

Torquil: Yes.

Nardwuar: Evan...

Torquil: Evan Bananly Cranley.

Nardwuar: I notice he wears beads. He's wearing some beads in some video that's up there on the

internet.

Torquil: He's an inveterate bead wearer. Yes, that is true.

Nardwuar: But then, I also notice he played trombone on the High Dials CD.

Torquil: [laughing]

Nardwuar: Montreal garage rockers. Used to be called the Datsuns.

Torquil: Uh, I'm sure he did. Cranley will pretty much play trombone on any record you want him to, as long as you promise him twenty bucks. You don't have to pay him. You just have to tell him you're gonna pay him, and he'll show up and do it. You've gotta let him smoke cigarettes in the booth, though.

Nardwuar: Was he the guy that won the YTV Achievement Award (a youth achievement award)?

Torquil: Evan Bananly Cranley is the winner of the YTV Achievement Award for the year 1986 ["Oh my God!" yelled in background]. He's shocked that you know that.

Nardwuar: The thing is, it's just been an interesting history. Was it a band that he won?

Torquil: He also won Just Like Mom. I don't know if you know that Nardwuar, but Cranley is also the winner of Just Like Mom. He won a barbecue, a ten-speed bike, and, uh, something else, but I can't remember.

Nardwuar: For the YTV thing, what exactly did he win from YTV? 'Cause the YTV Achievement Award winners is a long, distinguished list of these people—like, it's interesting that the Stars joined this list. For instance, Plumtree, The Smugglers, and Barenaked Ladies all have won YTV Achievement Awards.

Torquil: I did not know that. Well, I think he won for being part of a little hippie collective called Gypsy Soul, and I think they won for Most Promising Newcomers of the Year, or something like that. I'm here to

tell you they weren't promising at all.

Nardwuar: And Torq of the Stars, what about Chris from your band? Chris Seligman.

Torquil: Yes, Chris Seligman, yes.

Nardwuar: What is his background?

Torquil: Well, he was a, uh, childhood baseball star. Big, big guy on the mound. Big pitcher for little league. And then he went to Boston University for a while, and took some French horn. He played in the pit orchestra of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* on Broadway for a year or two.

Nardwuar: Is that where you met him?

Torquil: No, I've known Chris since we were eight years old. I met him in grade three. We've been friends all our lives, y'know. That's where we started writing music, when me and Chris were hanging out in New York together and we wrote some music.

Nardwuar: Does he have any musical background from his parents or cousins or anything, because I noticed there's a Matthew Seligman, who's in the band the Soft Boys, y'know.

Torquil: Yes! Yes, of course, yes, Matthew Seligman, also a good producer now. I think he produces a lot now.

Nardwuar: Is there any connection there, or is that just a fluke?

Torquil: I don't know. They might be distant cousins. I think Chris's grandfather was a trumpet player in a jazz band.

Nardwuar: Really? You think they might be cousins?

Torquil: Uh, yeah? Seligman, Seligman? It's possible.

Nardwuar: That's an interesting linkup—another linkup for the Stars. You have the '60s punk linkup with the amazing Jaybees and the '70s punk linkup with the Soft Boys.

Torquil: We are for the ages, Nardwuar.

Nardwuar: Well actually, it continues on for the 21st Century. Now you're on tour right now, Torq of the Stars, you're on tour, right now. You guys are on tour.

Torquil: We are. We are outside the Whipped Cream Clothing Store in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Nardwuar: You are playing Saskatoon tonight, you are playing Sask...

Torquil: Yes, we are.

Nardwuar: Are you playing Amigos?

Torquil: Yes, we are.

Nardwuar: You are playing the legendary AMIGOS!

Torquil: Of course we are. I have to have the veggie burger. I can't pass it up.

Nardwuar: Amigos. Have you

ever played Amigos before?

Torquil: Yes! Yes, we have a couple of times.

Nardwuar: Did you ever play there when you got to be able to have a band room? When the band (hotel) room was actually at the actual club?

Torquil: No, I haven't, I didn't even know there was one.

Nardwuar: It was the most amazing experience, because the band would play, and then after the gig, the party would continue on up at the room, get it? The crowd would...

Torquil: Fantastic.

Nardwuar: The crowd—so more bands were sucked, chucked and fucked at Amigos than any other club...

Torquil: [laughing]

Nardwuar: ...in North America! Well, maybe in Canada. It was an



amazing place.

Torquil: Well, it's pretty typical of my life that that no longer happens, just as I arrive.

Nardwuar: So the Stars are playing tonight, at Amigos. Broken Social Scene are on tour. The Stars are on tour. The Metric are on tour. Who is playing in Broken Social Scene? Like, aren't you in Broken Social Scene? What's going on?

Torquil: I am, but they're not on tour just at the moment. They're going on tour in Europe in a couple of weeks and some of us are going over to do that, right after we finish this. But they do occasionally have a people shortage. And then what happens is they just get people who they know in the city, or don't know even, somebody they meet in a bookstore or something, and they say "Do you know the words to 'Almost Crimes?'" And the person

that person and by the band.

Nardwuar: But I...

Torquil: And we all are.

Nardwuar: But I'm afraid I might've played the wrong era of Prefab Sprout. If you guys are inspired by Prefab Sprout, what era are you inspired by?

Torquil: [laughs]

Nardwuar: Are you compared to, like, early, late middle? Did I play the wrong one? I don't know.

Torquil: I think we sound more like middle, you know '92, '93, kind of, uh, y'know, *Jordan the Comeback*, and *Andromeda Heights*. I'd love to sound like '86—y'know "When Love Breaks Down" and stuff like that, but we're just not that good.

Nardwuar: I played "Here on the Erie." That's what I played.

Torquil: Oh yeah, from *Swoon*.

Nardwuar: That was too early

Canadian?!

Torquil: Yeah, he's a Canadian. He's from Toronto. We grew up with him. And he also...

Nardwuar: When did he... when?

Torquil: He has a dog called Macy, and he named her Macy before he even joined Macy Gray's band. How weird is that?

Nardwuar: That is pretty weird! When did he produce the Wu-Tang Clan?

Torquil: He did that back in, like, '97. He worked with—I think it was Rahzel {from the Roots?}, or one of those—it was one of the dudes. I mean, I think to say that he worked with the Wu-Tang Clan is probably an exaggeration. There's a great many people with extraordinary names involved in that band, so I can't, y'know... I smoke too much pot to remember.

Nardwuar: You are comprised of

Nardwuar: And you are Torq of the Stars—and you can keep wearing it for the next four years, so...

Torquil: Yeah! Isn't that fantastic! My fashion is no longer irrelevant. It's great. He's being so helpful.

Nardwuar: It's not going to go out of date. And I notice you also share your birth date with Murray, the lead singer of the Dears.

Torquil: I do! That's right.

Nardwuar: You have the same birthday. What is going on with the Dears? I heard that Morrissey, like, personally requested them to open. It wasn't some booking agent, that he personally requested that the Dears open for him. Is this true?

Torquil: It's absolutely true, and then he walked up to Murray, and he said: [thick British accent] "Ah luv your records. Forge on—forge, forge, forge." And then he made a little fake gun at Murray, and then

Torquil: He's, uh, he's got a pickle up his bum.

gets to sing it, pretty much.

Nardwuar: How many of you guys actually play in Broken Social Scene? And should Broken Social Scene fans feel gypped that you're on tour? Like, you should be working with them right now. What are you doing?

Torquil: Uh, I think that Broken Social Scene fans *should* feel gypped. I think that's an important emotion for them to have. But, um, and there's, I don't know, maybe—at any time there could be five people, two people, in the Broken Social Scene. There could be one, if Kevin's upset. There could be twenty-five. There could be twelve. There could be fifteen. That's, y'know, in that range.

Nardwuar: Torq of Stars, I played the song "Let It Go" by you guys.

Torquil: Yes, it's called "The Big Fight," but some people have it as "Let It Go." It's interesting. Some people know it that way.

Nardwuar: And I compared it to Prefab Sprout.

Torquil: Thank you very much.

Nardwuar: Now, was I wrong to do that? I played a Prefab Sprout song and then I played some of you guys, and it didn't seem like the two were, kind of, the same. I was hoping they'd be the same, but they weren't. Are there...

Torquil: But you know what Nardwuar? That's my greatest hero in the world. So you were right to do that.

Nardwuar: I played the...

Torquil: I'm inspired deeply, by

wasn't it?

Torquil: Yeah, we're not arty enough for that.

Nardwuar: I was gonna play *The Comeback* CD, just because the name sounded so good: *The Comeback*.

Torquil: *The Comeback* and *The Protest*, that is, *Protest Songs*, maybe you could put those together, I think that's kind of equal.

Nardwuar: Winding up here, Torq of the Stars, I wanted to ask you about Dave Hodge, not Dave Hodge from *Hockey Night in Canada*, but Dave Hodge, the guy who mixed your LP.

Torquil: Yes!

Nardwuar: It appears that he mixed Bran Van 3000 and the Wu-Tang Clan?

Torquil: It's true! It's true. And he not only did that, but he went to grade six with us. He's one of our...

Nardwuar: So are you afraid? Because what the hell happened to the Wu-Tang Clan and what the hell happened to Bran Van?!

Torquil: [laughing] Well, we were a bit afraid about that Nardwuar, and that's why, y'know, we don't solely work with Dave, because we're afraid he does have a curse... No, I'm just kidding. Dave is an amazing producer and he works with all kinds of people. He also plays trombone—you'll like this, more connections, Nardwuar—he plays trombone in Macy Gray's band.

Nardwuar: And this is a

several members in your band. Amy is in your band. Was she in a band at one point called Edith's Mission?

Torquil: She was, indeed. She was in a band called Edith's Mission, with Emily Haines of Metric.

Nardwuar: And somebody called Ibi.

Torquil: Ibi Kaslik, who's a great novelist.

Nardwuar: And she wrote your liner notes. Who is Ibi? Where can people learn more about Ibi and where are her novels?

Torquil: Uh, her novels are for sale. Her first novel is called *Skinny* and it just came out a couple of months ago and it's for sale at bookstores everywhere. She's an amazingly beautiful woman and she's a great, great writer. She's a dear old friend of Amy's and of all of ours. We like to get everybody in the family involved when we make things, y'know?

Nardwuar: Now winding up here, Torq of the Stars, what sort of t-shirts are you wearing these days? Because you were spotted wearing an "I Love the Dears" t-shirt.

Torquil: Yes! Well, I do love The Dears. They're a fantastic band. These days, I have one that says "Tobias—why?" on it, that I wear sometimes. And I also have one that says "Bush = war criminal." And I have another one and it says "Evil Doer," beneath. I think this year it's going to be fashionable to wear a lot of anti-Bush propaganda... on your shirt.

he shot at him with his fake gun and said, "I'll be watching you in the audience tonight." And Murray collapsed in tears.

Nardwuar: I think it's time to quit right there, isn't it?

Torquil: Yeah, it's over. But you know what happened today? Now they're gonna go open for R.E.M., all across Italy.

Nardwuar: OH, NO!

Torquil: Those dudes are popping!

Nardwuar: Are they getting any more Morrissey action? Like didn't they do something in L.A.? How did that go?

Torquil: They did Halloween in L.A. with Morrissey, and I think they're going back to do two more shows with him. They're part of the Mozzer family, man.

Nardwuar: So, do the Mozzer fans like the Dears now? Like are they accepted?

Torquil: I think they just sold out a 700-seater in Sheffield, England, man.

Nardwuar: Torq, why don't you like the Magnetic Fields? What's wrong with the band the Magnetic Fields?

Torquil: The band the Magnetic Fields are no good, Nardwuar, because the man who runs them, Stephen Merritt—I don't know if you've met him or not. He's, uh, he's got a pickle up his bum, he's a very, uh, snobby, mean guy, and he's mean to people who he considers less than him and he has a little dog that he carries around with him. He's not rock 'n' roll,

Nardwuar.

Nardwuar: But he's a legend, though! Like what sort of person would not like the Magnetic Fields? Does that mean you don't like twee music, or you like the music, you just don't like the person?

Torquil: Betty Crocker is a legend! That doesn't mean anything. Being a legend is—Pete Rose is a legend.

Nardwuar: But, but the Magnetic Fields! Like, like does that mean you don't like twee music?

Torquil: I like twee music, but I think that if you're gonna be twee, you should drink a lot, y'know what I mean? You can't just be twee and, like, have coffee. That's just going too far. If you're gonna be twee, be a hopeless alcoholic.

Nardwuar: Lastly Torq, I wanted to ask you just a tiny bit about your acting in stuff. Your acting. So you've done a bit of acting, like your original producer—well, the guy that lent you the place to record in, Allan Nicholls.

Torquil: Yeah.

Nardwuar: Who was in the Jaybees—amazing Montreal garage punk from 1966. Is it true you were on *Sex and the City* with Alanis?

Torquil: [laughs]

Nardwuar: You were on *Sex and the City* with Alanis!

Torquil: Nardwuar, you've asked me a lot of interesting questions tonight, but I knew you were gonna bring that one up, because everybody does. It's true. I was. It's, uh, it's true. What can I say?

Nardwuar: Okay! You were...

Torquil: And you know what else? It's the single thing that I've done in my life that people really find remarkable.

Nardwuar: Well...

Torquil: Everything else, they don't really care about.

Nardwuar: Well, hold on...

Torquil: Appear on *Sex and the City*. Man. It blows their minds.

Nardwuar: You had a couple of lines talking about pleather, right? I won't make you recite the line...

Torquil: No, I'll recite them for you! I said [in a high, fey voice], "Are you wearing pleather?!" And then I said, "Oh please! Vodka tonic is so 20th Century."

Nardwuar: And now you're out of there. That's it. You're gone, erased from history. That's it!

Torquil: [laughs]

Nardwuar: But it doesn't stop there. No, it doesn't stop there. You, Torq of the Stars, also acted with Sarah Polley and Loreena McKennitt!

Torquil: It's all true.

Nardwuar: On *Heaven and Earth*! I mean that's a step up from *Sex and the City*. Sarah Polley.

Torquil: I knew you'd do the *Heaven and Earth*! I know you'd find that one! Yes, that was a classy operation.

Nardwuar: Loreena McKennitt! And then, to top it all off, you Torq of the Stars, in your acting career, you acted with Philip Seymour Hoffman, a.k.a...

Torquil: A.k.a. Philip?

Nardwuar: A.k.a. Lester Bangs!!

Torquil: Yes! Indeed, yes, a.k.a. Lester Bangs, I did. He licked my ass, every night in fact, for seven months.

Nardwuar: What, now what haven't I asked you about? Did you audition for the Edison Twins? Were you into the Edison Twins?

Torquil: [laughing] My life is a trivia question. Is it not?

Nardwuar: Did you audition for the Edison Twins? That's what we've gotta know, lastly here.

Torquil: I honestly cannot answer you. I—I can't remember. I may have auditioned for the Edison Twins. It sounds like an interesting project. Why don't you send me the slides?

Nardwuar: And now you're into Shakespeare. Oh my God, what has happened?

Torquil: Yes, and now I'm into Shakespeare.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks again for phoning into the Nardwuar the Human Serviette Radio Show,

Torq of the rock 'n' roll band...

Torquil: Stars! Thank you so much, Nardwuar. We appreciate it.

Nardwuar: And why should people care about the Stars—oh, sorry, Stars? Why should people care?

Torquil: Because we care about you!

Nardwuar: Well, thanks very much, Torq. Keep on rockin' in the free world, and...

Torquil: Thanks, buddy, you too.

Nardwuar: ...and doot doola doot doo...

Torquil: [like a train whistle] doot doot!

You can also listen to this interview by hopping to: <http://nardwuar.com/>

NARDWUAR

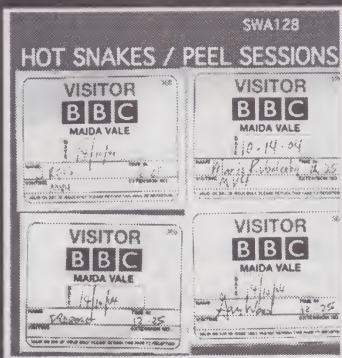


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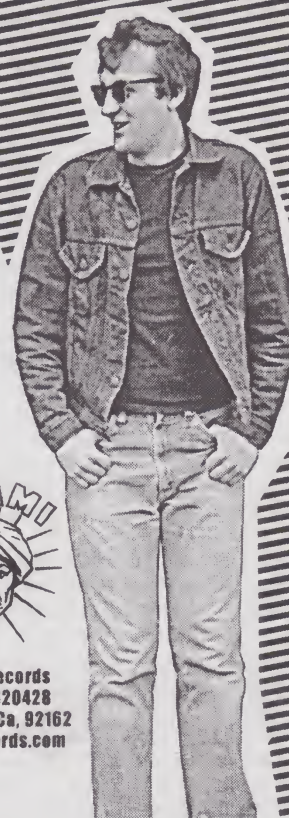
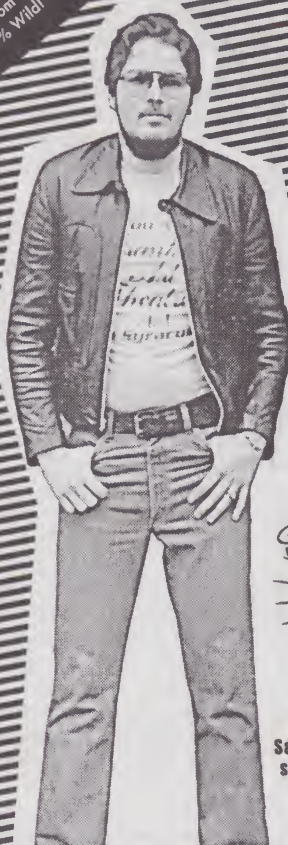
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JOSH LANE

KIND OF A SEWER

I've got a soft spot for functional alcoholics.

ONE REPORTER'S OPINION

Las Vegas has quite a lofty reputation. It's a city that has inspired a litany of books, movies, and the best song that Gas Huffer ever wrote. Oscar Zeta-Acosta hid from honkey political oppressors by going to Las Vegas. My friend Aaron Lay ended up sitting in a bathtub full of beer wearing nothing but a captain's hat and a smile in Las Vegas. Needless to say, I had some very high expectations for the weekend of the Punk Rock Bowling Tournament in Las Vegas.

FRIDAY

Woke up sick. Yay! I would have hated to have a vacation go off without a hitch. The drive out to Vegas was pretty painless, and I can say that I'm extremely glad that I did not end up in the car with my friends Megan and Laila singing along to Guns N Roses (who, despite popular belief, are a poodle rock band exactly like all the other poodle rock bands of the era and anybody who tries to tell you otherwise is lying). Our caravan stopped for lunch at a casino on the outskirts of town, where we tried our hand at a Skee-Ball version of bowling and entertained a family of four by having a graphic conversation about sex. The casino was partially owned by the Bass Pro Shop, whose slogan was "Let's Kick Some Bass." Yeah, let's not. Pardon my ignorance, but wouldn't you want to *catch* the bass as opposed to kicking it? And why is there a Bass Pro Shop in the middle of Nevada?

By sheer coincidence, when we got to the hotel, the band in the lounge was playing the "drifting along with the tumbling tumbleweeds" song from the beginning of *The Big Lebowski*. Big plus.

While we were waiting for everybody to sort of filter in, we (for some reason) killed a lot of time by sitting in the hotel room listening to the Thin Lizzy tape that proved Laila's taste in music wasn't completely awful. Yeah, you read that right: surrounded by punk rockers in a Las Vegas casino on a Friday night and I was doing the exact same thing that I did when I was thirteen years old. Party! Whoo!

Later on, me and my friend Mike decided to head downstairs and get a hot dog. One of the many wonders of Las Vegas is that you can get a hot dog at any time of day. It might be a really crappy hot dog that makes your breath smell like old band-aids, but you can get one twenty-four hours a day.

On the way, we had a nice, leisurely fifteen-minute wait for one of the hotel's two working elevators to hit our floor. Hats off, Gold Coast! In the lobby, there was a sign that said, "We're

modernizing our hotel. Sorry for the inconvenience." If I may be so bold, I would now like to regale you, the loyal reader, with the same joke that I told to everyone that I rode an elevator with over the course of the weekend: "Apparently, 'modernizing' means 'making it suck!'" I'll be here all week. Try the veal!

After eating our sub-par hot dogs, Mike and I ran into my old roommate Katie. If you see Katie Kirkpatrick, buy her a beer. Not a Sparks, though. She might try to pee on your leg. Over the course of the evening, we discussed tech support operators in Nepal who claim that their name is Ace, forced down some more fine hotel cuisine ("This isn't chili, this is like ground beef and ketchup."), and commented on how weird it was being surrounded by punk rockers who put a lot of effort into how they look. It's great they're off playing individual like all of their friends are, but I always feel like Unfrozen Caveman Lawyer in situations like that, like I should apologize for not understanding. "I'm from a small town. I know nothing of your bondage pants. Your immaculately polished combat boots confuse my tiny small-town brain." For me, it's like high school all over again, only now people are scoffing at me for not having a throat tattoo. Yeah, the Varla girls are pretty hot and all, but I can't imagine them saying, "Hey, check out the guy with the ketchup stains on his work pants! I bet if we play our cards right, he'll let us check out his Superchunk records!"

Anyway, soapbox rants aside, the hanging out lasted until the wee hours of the morning and ended with more Thin Lizzy. A cowboy's life is the life for me...

SATURDAY

Buffet time! My favorite part about Vegas is easily the abundance of buffets. I mean, the mere *concept* of a buffet is pure genius: all the food you can eat, lined up and laid out for your perusal. Bacon and carrot cake. Watermelon and crawdads. Sweet merciful Christ. It's been said that Southerners have the most voracious appetites in America, that we eat like we've only got so much time on Earth and we'd hate to waste any of it being hungry. My family's Christmas spread typically includes a big tray of barbecued pork, a big vat of meatballs, and deep-fried hush puppies. I'm not a big guy. I tip the scales at barely a buck-thirty, but don't let my Twiggy-esque figure fool you: my digestive tract is strictly Two Forks Finnegan and that is no hyperbole.

After we ate, we bowled, which I guess was supposed to be the point of this article instead of

food and *Jailbreak*. At the bowling alley, we met up our last-minute replacement bowler, Mr. Anthony Taylor. As you probably guessed, Anthony Taylor is the father of Todd Taylor, and hell, you know who he is. Mr. Taylor, who at the time of this writing is approaching retirement, was wearing a Razorcake "Fuck Off" t-shirt and was generally a much better sport than I probably would be if I were in my sixties and had to spend my Saturday bowling next to a bunch of obnoxious drunks with funny haircuts. He also bestowed upon me what must surely be Thee Western Hemisphere's Coolest Bowling Ball: it's sparkly blue like the toothpaste I used as a kid and the previous owner's name was apparently Amy. That's right: I bowled with a woman's bowling ball and I did pretty damn well with it (at least by my standards). Broke a hundred all three games and pulled a shoulder muscle patting myself on the back for it. Thanks to our massive handicap, our team finished 74th out of 140 (Tiltwheel got last! High five!). In typical Josh Lane fashion, I followed up four consecutive gutter balls with three strikes in a row. It was also a bummer bowling on the opposite end of the alley from most of my friends and thereby missing out on Team Tiltwheel, the Bar Feeders, and Todd's dad, but what can you do? Todd's dad also gave me a bowling bag, which garnered its share of compliments ("I like the feel of your ball bag, dude.") and I am eternally grateful for.

The bowling portion of the day concluded, many people headed for the official Punk Rock Bowling Tournament show at that hallowed punk rock venue, the Las Vegas House of Blues. Apparently there was some sort of problem (aside from the inherent problem of having a punk rock show in a venue that made its name through performances by bands like the Dave Matthews Band), where people couldn't get into the venue if they had studs on their jacket or chain wallets. I don't know the details; I opted to hang out with Katie and her boyfriend Travis until their late-night flight back to Gainesville, Florida, where the only gambling there is to be had is at the Ocala Jai Alai Fronton, and the beer is worse but the hot dogs are better. Travis wisely pointed out the potpourri of smells throughout the casino, where at any given time "it either smells like a cigarette, a fart, or hairspray." Seriously, if I wanted to hang out in a room that smelled like a stagnant fart, I wouldn't have to leave my house.

Later on, we found out that Vena Cava had played a generator show in the parking lot. Unfortunately, we were too busy introducing fellow Razorcaker Art Fuentes to Sparks, the drink of choice for masochistic drunks

everywhere.

At some point, the band in the lounge started playing "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen, prompting Katie and Megan to break out in song. They were soon joined by a really, really drunk guy who appeared to have had a bowel movement in his sweatpants. When he couldn't remember the words, he didn't miss a beat; he just replaced the missing word with "sexy" and kept right on going. It ruled. It was on par with the time I saw the lead singer of a Roy Orbison cover band trip over a cord and fall onto a table of food in the middle of "Only the Lonely."

My main regret is being too broke to bet on the horse races like Henry Chinaski, because I can't even *imagine* betting on a horse racing against Snoop Dawg, who soundly whooped ass at the track on Saturday.

Towards the end of the night, Art and a couple of guys from the Triple Rock bowling team ("What do you mean, what do we do at the Triple Rock? We drink!") gave me a bear hug and informed me that California and Minneapolis now have my back and if anybody fucks with me, they fuck with California and Minneapolis, too. So take heed, readers: if you were previously entertaining thoughts of fucking with me, doing so would also result in fuck-

ing with California and Minneapolis.

I'm not sure whether or not Saturday night ended with Thin Lizzy.

SUNDAY

Woke up and watched part of the *Cosby Show* marathon. That Rudy sure is a trip. Then I realized I'm the biggest loser on the face of the planet.

During breakfast, we watched nationally televised bowling featuring a guy who looks like Willem Dafoe. He was also one of the subjects of a documentary about the professional bowling tour, which is way awesome. One of the guys was a cokehead who would do the crotch chop whenever he got a strike, one was a has-been who worked in a pro shop ("Somebody else's pro shop."), and then the Willem Dafoe guy who the PBA deemed "too clean cut" to promote. Meanwhile, you can buy bobblehead dolls of the crotch chop guy and Odor Eaters is the official sponsor of the tour.

Highlights from the second day of bowling include talking to Russ from the Tim Version, who inexplicably remembered me from the Fest two years ago and was equally confused by the *Quincy* costumes; Dave Guthrie, of the only

Razorcake team to advance to the second round, getting one of those bowling wrist guard jobs; and eating chicken fingers from the bowling alley snack counter, easily the best food in the casino. It was also cool to see the Bar Feeders do well in the tournament; I've got a soft spot for functional alcoholics.

Back in the hotel room, where people were listening to Thin Lizzy without my instigation, Shawn from the Tim Version showed me what must surely be Thee Coolest Tattoo in the Western Hemisphere: a broken heart with the phrase "Mama Tried" scrawled above it. Best. Thing. Ever. I felt bad that I provided the peppermint that ruined his drink. On the elevator, he struck up a conversation with some random square and told the guy, "Hey, we fly, we party, we land. That's just how we do it." Shawn from the Tim Version totally wins.

The awards ceremony was Sunday night. I was informed of this fact on an elevator full of old ladies by a Mr. Josh Mosh of San Diego, who so eloquently told me, "We're gonna fuckin' party," and promptly got a tongue-lashing from the old ladies. This was just one of the many beautiful things said by residents of San Diego that weekend. Such phrases include "Yeah, way to puke up cigarette butts, dude," "Hey, Shitneck," the ever-useful "Shit's not tight, shit's pretty fuckin' stupid," and the greatest insult anyone has ever hurled at me, "Hey Pepsi, go back to China!" We also had an in-depth discussion of disgusting, mostly made-up sexual maneuvers such as the Angry Dragon, the Houdini, and the Helen Keller ("I didn't know that had a name, I just thought it was called Thursday night!"). Team Tiltwheel has a reputation for a being a bunch of drunk fuck-ups, but hell, the sixty-some people who represented them were way fuckin' cooler than anything else the weekend offered, and without bondage pants, no less!

We also found out that Hunter S. Thompson killed himself, which was pretty weird. Who will look after the peacocks?

MONDAY

The nagging bug that I had all weekend turned into full-blown crappiness on the drive home. I was extremely glad (for once!) to get back home, where I made myself some Communist Bloc soup (potatoes, salt, and water, patent-pending) and nursed myself back to health.

A huge bummer about the whole weekend was the timing. On the way out of town, a billboard informed us that if the tourney had been one week later, we would have been in town to see Don "Funniest Comedian Ever" Rickles perform. I've always wanted to see Don Rickles and just heckle the guy and yell "WHO FART-ED?" after every joke he told. Actually, that's probably a good thing.

So yeah, all told, I'm kind of a wet blanket when it comes to the Punk Rock Bowling Tournament. I get bummed out by fancy-pants parrot punks and their frat-boy mentalities, and I'll never be comfortable seeing stuff like "Punk Rock—Sponsored by..." like it's the damn Pappy O'Daniel Old Time Music Flour Hour. Maybe next year I can just hang out in San Diego instead.

—Josh Lane

RAZORCAKE 19

Team Tiltwheel, Freakin' Out Squares

photo by Megan Pants



JOSH LANE



THE POPE IS DEAD,
LET'S ENGAGE IN RECKLESS USE OF CONTRACEPTION
OR
THE OCTOTHORP AND YOU:
PUNK ROCK AT THE ATOMIC LEVEL

Yes! That's right! You heard it here first! *THE POPE IS DEAD!!! THE POPE IS DEAD!!!* Funny, you'd think if the Pope died, there'd be something on the news about it, but, yes, that's right, POPE JOHN PAUL II IS DEAD, and I DIDN'T DO IT!!! Of course i didn't do it! Having been raised both Polish and Catholic, the amount of trouble i would be in, both karmic and otherwise, were i to be The Man Who Shot The Pope (as the Hugh Beaumont Experience said) (here's a bonus FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT for you: I still remember the name of the guy who shot His Holiness in like 1982—Mehmet Ali Acga. Why i remember this is unclear. I assume that, being as how i was sixteen or seventeen at the time, shooting the Pope seemed pretty rad. You can tell i'm getting older, and more conservative/reactionary in my ways, because now i frown on shooting the Pope [i mean, he's friggin' DEAD, for friggin's sake! What, you're gonna pop {"pope?"} caps in his ass while he's lying in state in the Vatican? OH, BIG MAN, SHOOTING DEAD POPES IN A BARREL!], and think marketing "ALLAH SUCKS" t-shirts is rad. I mean, what the

tion? Where's the pop, man?? WHERE'S THE LOVE???) We're lost, amigo. Sunk. *Our Popeless society has been plunged into utter disarray! Our planet has been suddenly riddled with doubt, trepidation, and dread of an uncertain future! IT'S FREAKING ANARCHY, JACK!!!* And, since it's Freaking Anarchy, Jack, and the Pope has been rendered null and void, i plan on using this Popeless Window of Anarchy (PWA) to SIN and SIN BIG since *THERE'S NO ONE ON DUTY RIGHT NOW TO KEEP TRACK OF THIS SHIT!!!* That's right! That's right! *FREE SIN 'til the end of the Papal Enclave! WHOO! Mortal Sins! Venial Sins! Gross Misconducts! WE'RE FREE TO BE YOU AND ME, BAY-BEE!!!* There's no Pope to tally up my indiscretions! I can literally get away with murder! *I can get away with SWEARING! Fuck yes! Shit yes! Cock yes!* And, believe you me—you ain't seen nothin' yet folks. I'm heading straight to the hard stuff while i'm off the Papal radar: *Not willing to content myself with merely swearing, i, Rev. Nørð (hmm... if there's no Pope on duty, perhaps my ministerial credentials have also been rendered inert until the Pope-dom goes back on line. Perhaps i need a new interim handle... something distinguished, but secular. I think "Baron Von Nørð" fills the bill nicely. SO BE IT! Until the next Pope is invented, i shall be referred to ONLY as "Baron Von Nørð!"* Well, either that or "Fingers Murphy")—that is to say, i, Baron Von Nørð, intend to *FLAGRANTLY FLOUT CHURCH DOCTRINE AND STOOP TO THE USE OF*

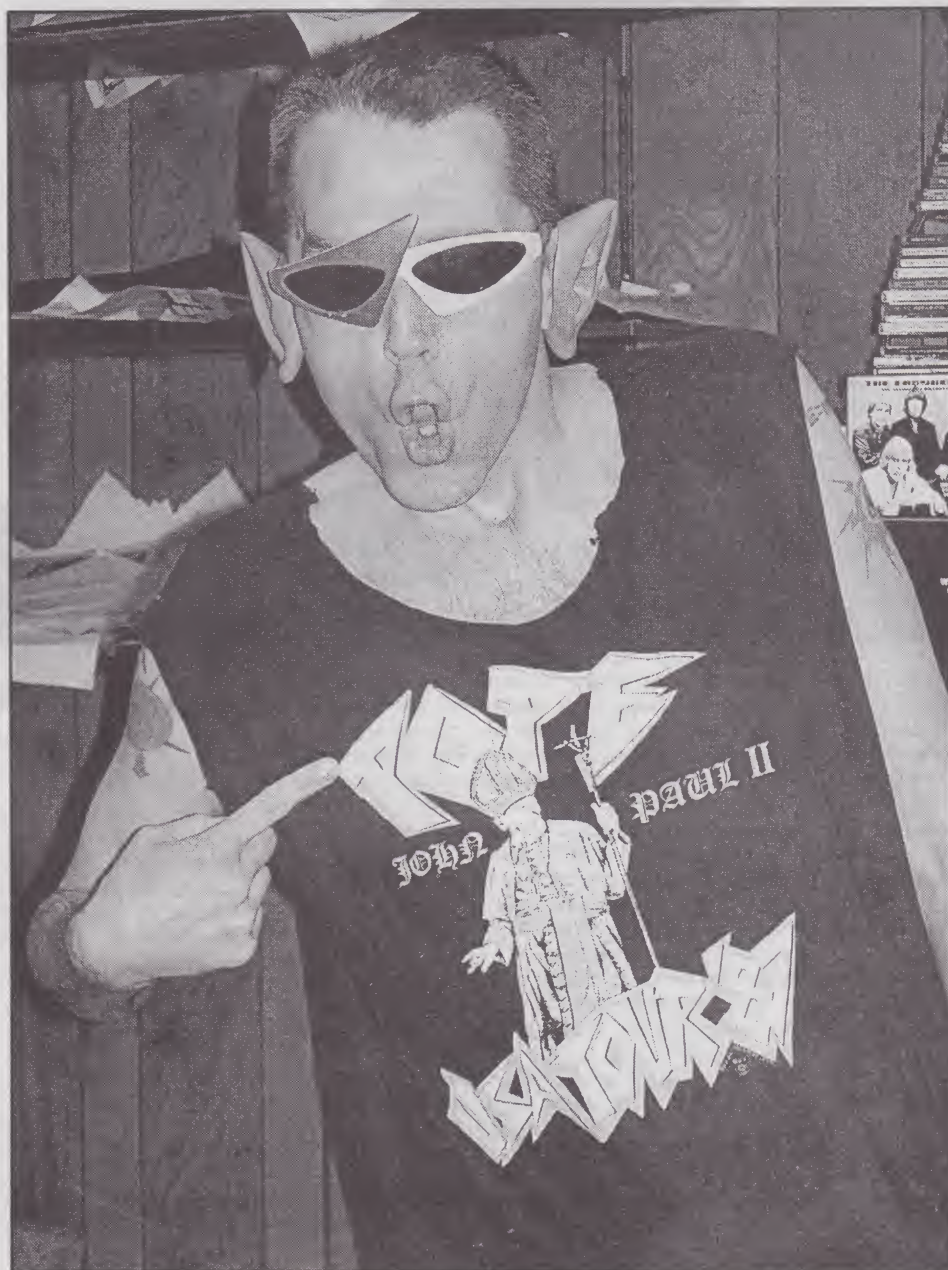
Marketing "ALLAH SUCKS" t-shirts is rad. I mean, what the fuck-if there's gonna be a Holy War, i want part of the concessions.

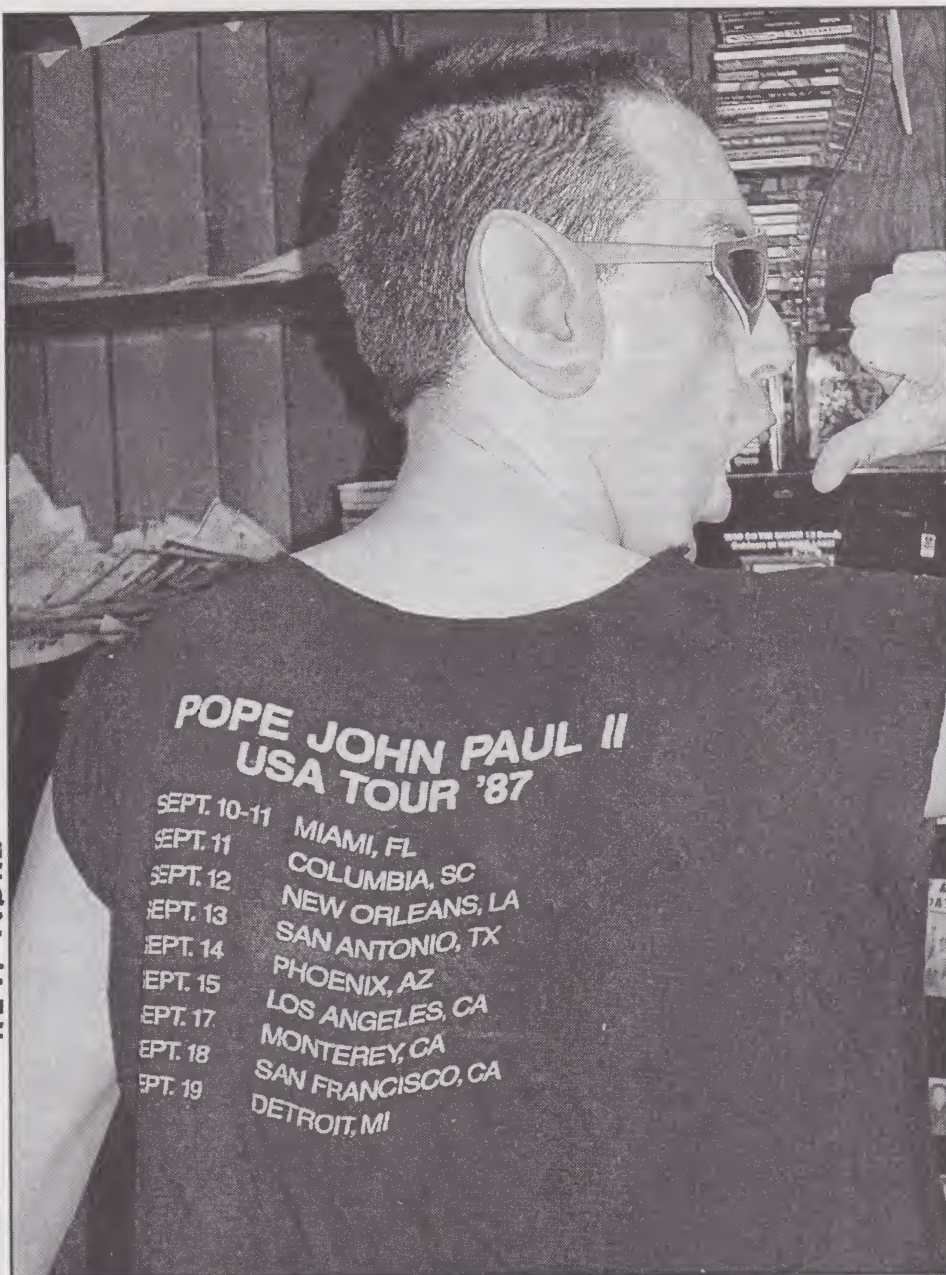
fuck—if there's gonna be a Holy War, i want part of the concessions) (in a completely unrelated FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT, i also know the name of the [Chinese, i think?] soldier who shot John Birch—Tao Chu Kwang—and the names of both the people who shot Reagan: Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme and John Hinckley, Jr. Unfortunately, owing to my great stockpile of useless memory data regarding assassination attempts, i have somehow forgotten a number of very important other facts, such as the name of the artist who drew *Justice League of America* after Dillin. The system will now reboot) would be vast indeed (further, shooting the Pope™ just seems like a baaaaaad idea to begin with: I mean, think about it: You, the lone gunman, are out on the grassy knoll, with the Holy See in your sights. You're looking thru your scope, finger's on the trigger, you're like "Okay, Pope, your ass is grass and i'm the lawnmower" [in a Carl from *Aqua Teen Hunger Force* voice] [which, i guess, would make you "Mehmet Ali Aqua." Ouch.] and then you see his hat, and before you even knew it, you'd be like "fuck, i gotta take one shot at that god damn hat!" and you'd shoot his hat off, and then the Archbishop of Canterbury or something would grab the Pope and yank him to safety and a bunch of nuns with wraparound sunglasses would be bludgeoning your ass with lead yardsticks before you even got off a second shot. Let's face it: Unless Beldar the Conehead gets elected the next Pope, man will never successfully assassinate the Holy See via gunfire—that big-ass Pope hat is just *too inherently inviting* of a target *not* to shoot at first). I mean, come on, admit it: The Pope was cool, if for no other reason than, without His holy intervention, when we wanted to express overwhelming assent with a statement, we'd all still be saying things about bears shitting in the woods instead of "is the Pope Polish?"—which, of course, begs the rather thorny question of what we're gonna say *now* in these cases. Are we gonna retreat to the dark ages of "does a bear shit in the woods?" Will we soldier on with "is the Pope Polish?" regardless of the pontiff's current, non-living state? Will we modify the phrase to "Is the Pope Italian?" (Fuck that! "Is the Pope Italian" my dupa! Where's the allitera-

(GASP!) *CONTRACEPTIVES!!! A LOT!!!* That's right! That's right! You heard me right the first time! I, BVN, intend on embroiling myself in such a veritable riot of contraception as to both beggar and bugger description!!! I mean, sure, the Virgin Mary conceived without sinning, but where's the fun in that??? I'm gonna sin without conceiving!!! Repeatedly!!! I'm gonna use so many condoms, they're gonna run my picture in *A Taste of Latex* as "Customer of the Month!" I'm gonna not only use condoms every time i have sex, but i'm also gonna poke holes in the ends, so i can employ the Rhythm Method as well! *I'm gonna use condoms when i MASTURBATE!!!* I'm gonna get custom-made birth control pills shaped and flavored like SweeTarts™! I'm gonna get a *coathanger IUD!!! SCREW YOU, POPE PIUS XII!!!* Ya ya ya, i know: "any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin." YEAH, WELL, *ONLY IF I GET CAUGHT, YA JIVE-ASS CONEHEAD MO-FO!!* (NOTE: Okay, if i could be completely serious for a moment, as you might have guessed, i'm playing most of this stuff up for laffs. I mean, seriously, you kids do *not* want to get mixed up in all of this "contraception" business, no sir. That'll put you on the fast track to Hades quicker than copping a heliocentric world view! What you *should* do, in observance of God's law, is to make sure all your ejaculated semen stays well within the birth canal after copulation. If some starts to drip out, fetch a plunger immediately, and plunge the errant goo back where it belongs, remembering to only PUSH with the plunger, then breaking the seal between the suction cup and the vaginal region via timely intercession of a finger or flat-blade screwdriver *before* pulling back the plunger and repeating the process. If the plunger needs to remain in place for a day or two, that's fine. I mean, there's a reason Catholic schoolgirls wear skirts and not jeans, *capeesh?*). Hey... wait a minute. Looking over Pius XI's edict a bit more closely, i can't help but notice that it clearly states that contraception is forbidden in *marriage*—but it does-

n't say anything AT ALL about contraception being forbidden in, like, pre- or extra-marital sex. So, wait, that means i'm *not* sinning by using contraceptives, since i'm not married? Well, *GEEZ!* Where's the fun in that??? What's the point of running amok on a Popeless Planet if the only thing i can think to do is swear, which i've been forgetting—i mean, *fuck*ing forgetting—to do anyway??? This is terrible. This is terrible. As a Catholic, i now feel guilt over not being able to sin properly during the Pope-free interlude. *Save me, Pope-to-be, save me!!! (at this point in time, i took off my shoes [i guess to put condoms on my toes, just in case lesbians come over and want to suck them], and, as fate would have it, plunked one size 11 white leather Converse™ All-Star 2000 [yes, i bought four pairs in 2000, because these are the only good shoes, ever, and just took the last pair out of the box last week] smack dab on my multiple outlet plug-in strip, turning off the power, and losing a whole shitload of writing, which i don't feel like recreating, so let's just pick things up in the middle, like they used to do with CFL games)* So, as i have just now so clearly and engagingly pointed out, all the world's most popular religions are, in fact, based around some kinda symbol: The cross and Christianity, the Star-O-David™ and Judaism, Buddah™ Records and Buddhism, etc.—and what's curiously parallel to this phenomenon is how symbol-dependent certain eras of punk rock are/were. This assertion is most easily illustrated by looking at early '80s hardcore: You had not only generic (or modifiably generic) symbols like the Anarchy "A" and the big "X" with the little "H" on the left and "C" on the right and the two letters on the top/bottom customized to represent home sweet home, but a wealth of individual band symbols as well. Black Flag had the bars, the Dead Kennedys had the beveled "DK" logo, Crass had whatever the fuck that thing was, 7 Seconds had the "7" in the crosshairs—even a band as inherently non-iconic as Hüsker Fricking Dü had that symbol that looked like the bottom of an ice cream cone after all the ice cream was gone. Even bands that had no symbol started boiling their name down to three letter abbreviations (often really stretching the boundaries of believable abbreviating, like "Suburban Mutilation" becoming "SUM," etc.), with three-letter band names apparently being brief and visually impactful enough to sort of serve dual duty as both name *and* symbol. Bands like Bad Religion and the Dead Kennedys even used the universal "no" symbol to cross out additional symbols (a cross and a swastika), yielding compound symbols as a result. The question posed is obvious: *So, uh, what the fuck is up with the symbols?* That's a good question. William S. Burroughs wrote that words were alien viruses that existed for no other reason than to replicate themselves (hey, look! I'm helping); the same might be said about symbols as well. I mean, yeah, i think we all understand the basic gist of Symbolic appeal: They're minimal but powerful little doo-dads that stand as shorthand for substantially more complex concepts, and act as a convenient and portable stimulus to provoke and/or focus the various attachments to said concepts that the viewer might already have in place. They also look cool on a banner or the back of a leather jacket. Blah blah blah. But, i mean, it's easy to understand why a knight on a crusade flies a banner with a cross on it; that's self-evident. What seems a bit less obvious to me is what compels people who *don't* have a stake (ha... "stake"... "crusade"... as in "burned at the..." oh, never mind) in the concept behind the symbol to replicate them. I mean, who among us *hasn't* doodled a "DK" logo or the bars on a phone book or margin at various points in time? Who hasn't, as a kid, before awareness of the implications of the symbol, scribbled a bunch of swastikas on a piece of paper (once we finally figured out how to draw 'em so they didn't just look like two twist-ties in a street fight)? Symbols

almost seem to affect part of the human brain with a morbid compulsion to replicate them; the act seems barely voluntary, as if it completely skirts the autonomous nervous system and travels from eyeball to hand without benefit of detouring to the brain for processing. A friend of mine who was in the Navy™ once wrote me a letter from boot camp, saying that he kept things together by taking a ball-point pen and scrawling a tiny "DK" logo, the bars, and "D.O.A." on the sides of the soles of his non-inspection shower shoes—kinda like some sort of mystic runes, or those weird tattoos Maori islanders get around their armpits, or other manner of conjuring up primitive ju-ju and keeping the Evil Eye at bay. *SYMBOLS ARE POWERFUL BUSINESS, DUDE!* Which, of course, brings us to The Octothorp. The Octothorp (i capitalize it because it looks cool) is that which we generally refer to as "the pound sign" or, more grievously, "the tic-tac-toe sign." It is this thing: #. I, like you, had no idea that The Octothorp was called The Octothorp until only recently, when i stumbled upon it whilst looking up the word "oenophile," which i thought looked kinda dirty. I mean, *really* dirty. Popelessly dirty! I thought it kinda sounded like someone who liked animal penises, but only the small, sort of conical kind that dogs have, so i thought i'd look it up. Unfortunately, i found that it only means "wine lover" (i suppose the fact that i read it in *Sports Illustrated* shoulda maybe been a clue that it wasn't anything interestingly scandalous). But, yes, on the way to "oenophile," i found out about "octothorp," which, of course, set me to thinkin': Firstly, i thought of how tragic it was that i was not made aware to the fact that The Octothorp was





POPE JOHN PAUL II
USA TOUR '87

SEPT. 10-11	MIAMI, FL
SEPT. 11	COLUMBIA, SC
SEPT. 12	NEW ORLEANS, LA
SEPT. 13	SAN ANTONIO, TX
EPT. 14	PHOENIX, AZ
EPT. 15	LOS ANGELES, CA
EPT. 17	MONTEREY, CA
EPT. 18	SAN FRANCISCO, CA
EPT. 19	DETROIT, MI

called The Octothorp back when i was in Boris the Sprinkler, which was peopled with characters with names that could have been pronounced "Paul Octothorp-One" and "Paul Octothorp-Two" for added moronic effect. Secondly, i thought about how—seemingly arbitrarily—The Octothorp is always placed on the same keyboard key as the numeral 3, their fates forever intertwined by the sheer accident of them both occupying the same typewriter key. What if the 3 and the Octothorp don't even like each other? What if the guy who invented The Octothorp ("Dr. Octothorp," presumably) liked the number 2 or 4 better than 3, and he's gotta see his creation—his life's work—his legacy—stuck on the "3" key for all eternity??? Thirdly, i thought about how a 7&7 is the only drink you can type the name of by only striking one key, although that didn't have much to do with The Octothorp. And, finally—as always—i thought about the question i can virtually certainly count on myself to ask, eventually, in situations such as these, ergo and to wit: *Is The Octothorp punk???* After some musing, i came to the conclusion that, relatively speaking, The Octothorp was likely punker than The Ampersand ("&"), which i always thought was kinda gay, and the dollar sign, and the percent sign, and anything that looked like some goofy little accent mark (like "¨" or "˘" or "˜", which i believe is called a "tilde," living testament to its gayness), but whether it was punk enough to be Fully Punk, i could not say. Limited but spirited research showed that Bob Dylan used The Octothorp in "Rainy Day Women #12 and 35," but that the MCS did *not* use it in "Rocket Reducer No. 62 (Rama Lama Fa Fa Fa),"

RAZORCAKE 22

which, to this investigator, seems to imply a tie of some sort (i am fully unsure of what sort). Expanding the scope of my inquiry further, to include alphanumeric characters, i began to muse on what *letters* were punk. Well, X, *that's* certainly a punk letter. After all, there have been *three* bands named "X" (the third so-named band being Wisconsinites who pronounced it "ten," like the Roman numeral. They had a cassette out pronounced "sixteen hundred." You do the math, Sparky). There was also, of course, that Florida band called "F," but F seems to be the province of all fuck-ups world-wide—therefore people who like, like, Mötley Crüe and stuff also embrace the F, so it's likely not fully punk (then again, X is also a very Sex letter as well, but, i mean, since we all have to share [uh...letters] [but, then again, when the Pope's in state, we all fornicate], you've got to allow some cross-pollination here and there). I decide Z is pretty punk, so's V (FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: V is the Roman numeral for five, and the intro to Beethoven's Fifth—*Dun dun dun DUUUHHHHNNNNNN!*—when translated into the *short-short-short-long* of Morse code—stands for the letter "V." I learned that reading comic books)—which leads me to think that, of all the rows of keys on a keyboard, the punkiest one by far is the bottom one—ZXCVBNM—by a long shot. I mean, the QWERTYUIOP row is totally cool, but it hardly exhibits that frisson of DANGER and EXCITEMENT and UNPRONOUNCEABILITY that ZXCVBNM does... and ASDFGHJKL just flat-out sucks. So then, of course, it hits me: Were i to carry out one of my wondrous Punk Rock Experiments, using one set of Punk Words and another set of Normal Words, would i find that the Punk Words tended to use the letters ZXCVBNM more than the Normal Words? I mean, since symbols enact strange and grave powers over those they come in contact with, compelling their victims to absent-mindedly scrawl them hither and yon, and since the alphabet is a communal set of twenty-six symbols that we are all forced to wade through, each and every day (kinda like a public pool with half the world using it simultaneously, and no chlorine), does it not follow that punk rockers—their tastes presumably dictated by a Punk

Aesthetic that should, theoretically, permeate every facet of their being and extend to the atomic level (as you may or may not recall, last issue's experiment involved breaking punk rock down to the "molecular level"—that is to say, making magnetic poetry out of the words from punk rock song titles. The "atomic level" would be breaking punk rock down one step further, to its constituent alphanumeric characters)—might very well gravitate toward usage of the alphanumeric characters that are manifestly the punkiest? One would think. One would think. **THEREFORE!** With God and the Pope's Dead Body as my witnesses, i, Baron Von Nørb, set out to find if punk rockers used the "punk" letters of the alphabet more often than the secular schmucks did. **STEP ONE:** Using band names as the basis for my experiment, i assembled a 417-character set of both punk band names and un-punk band names (in case you wanna check up on me, my punk letters were RAMONESSEXPISTOLSLASHDAMNEDHEARTBREAKERSJAMBUZZCOCKSDICKIESGENERATIONXSHAM69X-RAYSPEXUNDERTONESDEADBOYSEATERTVIBRATORS999STIFFLITTLEFINGERSSAINTSSIMPLETONESRIKLRIKCROWDBLACKFLAGCIRCLEJERKSEADKENNEDYSXADOLESCENTSFEARANGRYSAMOANSDESCENDENTS.D.O.A.TEENIDLESS.O.A.MINORTHREATGOVERNMENTISSUESCREECHINGWEASELVINDICTIVESQUEERSRIP

OFFSDEVILDOGSTEENGNERATEBRIEFSEP
OXIESEXPLODINGHEARTSLITTLEKILLERS
MRT.EXPERIENCEPAGANS and my unpunk letters were
ROLLINGSTONESSTYXREOSPEEDWAGONJO
URNEYASIAFOGHATAEROSMITHKISSQUEEN
BONJOVIPOISONMÖTLEYCRÜELAGUNSSLI
KNOTMUDVAYNEWALLFLOWERSGUNS'N'RO
SESCREEDBACKSTREETBOYSQUEENSRYCH
EBLACKCROWESLIMPBIZKITNAZERETHTHI
NLIZZYSLAYERBLACKSABBATHLEDZEPPEL
INAC/DCSEVENDUSTPAPAROAHLIVEGINB

in order of popularity: **EDI.RXGN9FK6**. Here's what the unpunk letters boiled down to: Eleven O's; ten L's; eight Y's and B's; five Z's; four H's, P's and U's; three A's and W's; two C's and J's; and one a piece of Q, V, 2, ., and /, which, of course, stands for AC/DC's lightning bolt. The unpunk letters, then, are **OLYBZHPUAWCJQV2/**. Huh. Being as 417 characters is still kind of a limited sample, i decided to throw out any letter that didn't occur more than four times on either side, leaving me with **EDIRX.GS9** and **OLYBZHPU** (i'll kinda alphabetize that, for your perceptual convenience: **EDGIRSX.9** and **BHLOPUYZ**). Well, i mean, *what the fuck???* The unpunk letter sample **CLEARLY** used more of the "punk" letters **ZXCVBNM**, by a wide margin! We were lucky we even

REV. NØRB

I MEAN, SURE, THE VIRGIN MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SINNING, BUT WHERE'S THE FUN IN THAT??? I'M GONNA SIN WITHOUT CONCEIVING!!!

LOSSOMSLITTLE RIVER BAND STARSHIPSWE
ETBAYCITYROLLERS **CHEAPTRICKBABYSU2**
JETSTROKESZZTOPPEARLJAMB **BRITNEYFOX**
METALLICASCANDALMOTORHEAD **BOSTONF**
LOCKOFSEAGULLS. After some debate, i decided to include non-alphanumeric characters in the experiment. i did not count Mötley Crüe's umlauts, however, because i could've negated them by adding Hüsker Dü to my punk sampling, which would have sort of been cheating, since i didn't have them in there to start with, but not really). **STEP TWO:** Being quite unable to think of any better way of going about things, i went between the two samples, deleting letters held in common, one by one (well, two by two, whatever) until the samples held no common elements. **STEP THREE:** I did the math. **STEP FOUR:** I was friggin' **SHOCKED** and **GROSSED!** Here's what the "punk" letters got reduced to, once all the common letters were removed from the mix: Seventeen E's; ten D's; seven i's and periods; six R's and X's; four G's, N's and 9's; three F's; a K and a 6. So, here are your "punk" characters,

got X! And the "punkest" letter of the alphabet, as defined by frequency of use, is E! **THE MOST POPULAR LETTER IN THE ALPHABET!** In a 417-character count sampling, punks used "E" **SEVENTEEN TIMES MORE** and used "Z" **FIVE TIMES LESS** than non-punks did!!! Needless to say, it is clearly apparent that punk-rock-ness breaks down at the atomic level (although it is also clearly apparent that 9's and periods are Very Punk); who would've thought that punk rockers would prefer ultra-generic letters like E and D and I to the more robust and wacky Z and Y and U of the unpunks??? Wait. Wait. One second, please. It has just been brought to my attention that "EDGIRSX" can be anagrammed into "SEX GRID," while "BHLOPUYZ" cannot be anagrammed into anything other than "ZPHOLUYB." Your new Supreme Pontiff, Pope John Paul George & Ringo (formerly known as Baron Von Nørb) regrets the error. *Cream Pies are GO!*

Love,
Nørb



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RHYTHM CHICKEN

THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

Parents made their kids pose in front of the mildly drunken Easter Chicken banging on his crappity trap for photos.

The Dinghole Reports
By the Rhythm Chicken
(commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[edited by Dr. Sienarf]

Happy fuckin' Easter, folks. Ugh, what a week. As I'm sure you know, it is my busiest week of the year. Hiding carrot-wreaths and Blatz-baskets in the homes of surly punk rockers can really take its toll on this aging Chicken.

(So, THAT'S where you've been. I was just asking Sienarf here what happened to the ol' RC. – F.F.)

Yup. It's the most Chickenfull time of the year.

[RC.....hmmmm. Say, chicken.... – Dr. S.]

Yes sir. Very busy, indeed. Not only have I been pulling over fifty hours a week slinging Italian grub for Milwaukee southsiders, but I've managed to toss some ruckus out to the proles here and there. The *Razorcake* staff party in Minneapolis was cancelled, so I decided to give an extra helping of chaos to my local fanbase.

[Say, Mr. Chicken. I couldn't help but notice just now that you share initials with... – Dr. S.]

Er... yes sir! I rocked this city to little brewtown bits! I spread my holy scriptures of mayhem from various street corners, rock club shitrooms, and even from the big stage! The cops were on my tail! My drunken antics were yet again creating urban legend! It is Easter time and I AM RISEN!

[Wait, wait, wait! I can't believe I never noticed this earlier. You, Rhythm Chicken, share initials with this very publication, *Razorcake*! That's very interesting. – Dr. S.]

Enough of this hooshwash! Let's move on to the Ruckus Reports!

(Hey, you know what else? He's been here since issue #1. It kinda makes you wonder. What came first, the Chicken or the mag? – F.F.)

I said ENOUGH! This hooshwash is pointless and worse yet, it's stalling my glorious dinghole report! Let's move on!

[I hypothesize that you, RC, are simply a hype-inducing mascot for *Razorcake*. You're just Todd and Sean's poster boy for this punk rock publication. In fact... you know, I've never really seen you and Todd in the same place at the same time. – Dr. S.]

Ruckus! On with the reports!

(Well, as far as I know, Todd can't play the drums at all. Can he? – F.F.)

[Yeah, but neither can the Chicken! – Dr. S.]

—Once again, the Rhythm Chicken has to tie up his two buddies and shove his old socks in their mouths—



Dinghole Report #66: A Day of Ruckus, Milwaukee-style!

(Rhythm Chicken sightings #349 to #355)

It was my day off! I was in Milwaukee! There was a show in town that night. A few old roadies were coming to town. A tour seemed imminent. I hadn't had a full-blown Milwaukee tour since being courted by the local Fox TV anchorman in Dec. '01. Just when Milwaukee starts forgetting that they do indeed have their very own Rhythm Chicken, that's when I attack! BUCK-AW! This particular Saturday morning I had to first pick up my Rooster Roller, the Chicken mobile. \$1,644.19 for a new transmission was a hellish way to start my day, but I needed my car, for there was touring to be done! From the auto fix-it shop I stormed over to Rockhaus to have Rusty repair my ailing Chickenkit. Seeing as how I forgot my pickle bucket drum throne up in Door County, Rusty helped me out with a new throne that was "within the Chicken's budget." The drums were ready and the transport was secured.

I waited anxiously at home for my roadies to arrive. Before long, Brian the Librarian and the Big E blasted into my home bellowing at the top of their lungs. It was time. I had made a mental list of tour spots. It was late February, but this was an exceptionally warm Saturday and the snowpiles were shrinking. Our first stop was at the corner of Kinnickinnic and Potter, across from both the Hi-Fi Café and Rushmor Records. I set up on the little median strip in the middle of Potter facing both establishments. Brian and the Big E stood on the opposing sidewalk and started yelling their heads off. My opening drumroll attracted a few hipsters out of the Hi-Fi and before long I was rockin' downtown Bayview like the days of old! Traffic slowed down. Cars honked. The Rushmor cretins oozed out to holler as well. Just when the Chicken gig was drawing to a close, a truck pulled up behind me and the driver held a

(Wait a minute. Are you sure you were delivering your punk rock Easter baskets all week? Are you sure you weren't visiting your parents in ARIZONA?! – F.F.)

[Yeah! And you know, the last time I caught a glimpse of you without your sacred Chickenhead on I just saw geeky glasses with a shaved head... hmmmmmm. That would explain the cancellation of the Minneapolis staff party. Both Todd and the RC could not possibly be seen in the same room. How could we have been so blind? TODD IS THE RHYTHM CHICKEN!!! – Dr. S.]

SILENCE!!!

huge inflatable alien guy out of his window violently shaking him at our hero! Oh, this was going to be a GREAT tour! As my poultry posse was loading the kit into my trunk a car pulls up right near us and a gentleman stepped out. He ran over and handed me a flyer for some church gathering, asking if I would come perform for his church. (???) I asked him if I could wear the Chicken head. By the time he said "No," we had left him in our dust!

Apparently, soon after we had flown the coop, Milwaukee's finest had arrived. They questioned the fine folks at both Rushmor and the Hi-Fi about some guy playing drums in the road wearing a "rabbit" head. The employees at both places said, "A RABBIT head? Nope. Didn't see anything like that!" While the police interrogations were underway we were already setting up three blocks north at Kinnickinnic and Lincoln. A busy bus stop is always a fun and uptight audience! A few people saw us setting up, read the bass drum, and were waiting there with their cell phone cameras at the ready. I rolled my thunderous mayhem out of the gates and the intersection was a'rockin'! Fans exited from Café Lulu and Stone Creek Coffee to offer their hollerings. A cop car even drove slowly past the Chicken show and didn't do a damn thing! Milwaukee's finest hard at work! We had just finished two full-blown Chicken concerts and felt we deserved some cool libations.

We trekked over to one of Milwaukee's true relics from the *Laverne & Shirley* era, the National Liquor Bar. What is a National Liquor Bar, you ask? Well, it's on National Ave. It's a bar, and they sell liquor to go. It's a huge liquor store with a huge, trashy bar in the same room. Only in Milwaukee. The huge sign out front shows a large liquor bottle pouring into a shot glass. THIS is truth in advertising! Once I asked my old boss about this beautiful dive and she said, "Do you remember all the faces in *Mad* magazine? Well, they're all sitting around the bar from 6 AM to 2 AM everyday. A real classy place!" We walked in and plopped our butts down at the mile-long bar. There's a teller booth at the back for people to cash their paychecks so they don't have to waste time going to the bank. This is sheer geniusness! The scratchy-voiced old lady behind the bar asks, "Whaddaya boys havin'?" I asked her how much tap beers were and I thought she said \$1.50. That sounded reasonable so I got a large Leinenkugels and handed over two dollars. My change was eighty-five cents. She actually said \$1.15!!! You gotta love any bar where you can nickel and dime your day away!

Chuck, the drummer from Brian's band, showed up. He was laughing at having to meet us at this holy shrine to cheap beer and social outcasts. I decided to save the indoor performance for my upcoming live recording, so after a few pints we were out front setting up the chicken stage on the median strip in the middle of National Ave. I just wanted my photo taken with that awesome sign! I started my middle of the road rock show as traffic zoomed past me in both directions. Lights were flashing and horns were honkin'. One passing motorist yelled out, "Hey, Rally Rabbit!" C'mon, buddy! The Rally Rabbit is DEAD! R.C.F.F.C.R.! Rhythm Chicken Forever, Forever Chicken Rhythm! The ladies in the Asian foodstore next door were in the front window inspecting the show, a little unsure if they should be enjoying it or not.

The next tour stop would have to be a bit

more surreal. It was time for Koz's Mini-Bowl! A little further south in yet another dirty corner of Milwaukee you will find Koz's Mini-Bowl, another relic from the *Laverne & Shirley* era. Koz's Mini-Bowl is much like any other brewtown old-man bar with its frosty one-dollar mugs of Pabst and dusty collection of Pabst, Blatz, and Schlitz items all over the walls. The two things that immediately set it apart are the stuffed lion behind the bar, supposedly from the old neighborhood Lion's Club, and the midget bowling lanes in the back room. Seriously, there are four lanes that are about fifteen feet long, each with ten mini-pins at the far end hand set by human pinsetters! The balls can be held in the palm of your hand and are rolled back to you by the pinsetters. These lanes make one feel like a giant. This particular Saturday afternoon the place seemed to be a poor man's Chuck E Cheese's (or Showbiz Pizza, depending on your regional variant), for the place was filled with drunk parents watching their little children try their games, getting them well accustomed to this town's rich bowling culture. I love Wisconsin!

We enjoyed a few frosty mugs, relaxing in the splendor of this mini-museum before I asked the old lady behind the bar if the Easter chicken could entertain the kids. Before she could turn us down my posse had the Chickenkit set up just left of the lanes. The children and parents didn't

seem to bat an eye at my setup. They were far too into their games. Then I MADE them notice. The opening drumroll suddenly woke up the kiddie league as they all began to cheer and jump around. Parents made their kids pose in front of the mildly drunken Easter Chicken banging on his crappity trap for photos. One excited father even yelled out, "Bunny Carlos! I get it, Bunny Carlos!" Boy, was HE drunk!

After a hearty Irish dinner at the County Clare downtown, it was time to hit the show. There was a benefit show at the Onopa brewpub in the Riverwest neighborhood, all proceeds going to local college radio station WMSE, a worthy cause. The Reverse opened the show with their smash-bash garagey beer rock. No matter how drunk you are when you're watching them, rest assured that the Reverse is more drunker! That's right, MORE DRUNKER! Next up were Chariots Race, featuring this day's roadies Brian and Chuck. Their set of Jawbox meets the Who got this Chicken lubed up for another rock'm sock'm gig. As their set drew to a close, I set up my Chickenkit in the handicap stall at the back of the men's room. This men's room is actually larger than some rock clubs I've seen, and the handicap stall door at the back opens up to form an almost natural stage! Between the bands there were WMSE DJ's spinning their shmoozy college rock wax, mildly entertaining the showgoers until a thunderous

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS LARSEN



RHYTHM CHICKEN

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hell rained from the guy's shitroom! The Chickenrock echoed at a deafening volume as the mini-concert hall filled up with about twenty screaming men and women alike. I toyed with the drunken crowd, getting them to yell and cheer. THUD, THUD, THUD! Yaaaaaaaay! THUD, THUD, THUD! Yaaaaaaaay! Putty in my wings. I concluded the ruckus rock show with the ever famous ruckus logs. They gasped and bellowed, just as I lost total control and tossed both ruckus logs into the air while attempting to do some type of gymnastics twirl-about on the bar over the stall door. My total lack of gymnastics savvy had me falling on top of my drums in a splendid belly flop.

I later found out that the DJ spinning her records in the main room was quite upset at me for robbing her of her crowd and their attention. The next band was Kenosha's The Danger. Their hum-drum sloppy glam flam kept me at the bar soaking more primer for my next appearance. After what seemed like a three-hour set by the Danger, I set up my stage in the handicap stall of the ladies' room, fulfilling the prophecy. Yet again, I stole a portion of the crowd from the main room as my audio chaos echoed from the ladies room concert hall. Well, ladies with full bladders can be an ornery bunch. Chuck later told me how priceless it was to be watching the Rhythm Chicken playing in the last stall when suddenly a few females would exit the other stalls, quite obviously pissed off, only to be replaced by more pissed off ladies. I guess one very upset girl tried the other two stalls to find them occupied and stood there looking past the Rhythm Chicken, con-

templating using the toilet behind him!

This brings to mind the very sound advice of my good friend Captain Foolhardy. If he were present I'm sure he would have put his arm around my shoulder and said, "Good job, Rhythm Chicken! NEVER LEAVE'M SMILING, MY FRIEND! NEVER LEAVE'M SMILING!" Well, I guess after the gender-frustrating rock gig, one mad lady yelled out, "Why doesn't he just do this in the men's room?!!" to which Chuck replied, "But the Rhythm Chicken is a WOMAN!" The female left even more upset and confused. This time I guess I REALLY upset the DJs in the main room. This is where I hear Captain Foolhardy's angelic voice on my shoulder yet again, "NEVER LEAVE'M SMILING, MY FRIEND! NEVER LEAVE'M SMILING!" (Then I hear Timebomb Tom's voice saying, "So tell me Terry Federer, I MEAN MR. X! MR. X!")

By this time there was only an hour of bar-time left so I zoomed down to the Cactus Club in my own neighborhood. There were no bands playing this Saturday night, but some local scenester's birthday party had the back room pumping dance music with a flashy light show. For the first time in Rhythm Chicken history, I took my drumset to the main stage! Now you KNOW I was drunk! Front and center on the main stage, I haphazardly threw together my kit to the cheers of the late night partiers. Alex, head of production at the club, adjusted the stage lights to highlight my mutant sideshow. By the time my opening drumroll began to pour off the stage the back room was actually quite full! From the toilet to the main stage in forty minutes! The room filled with Chicken-ass

monster rock! The crowd yelled and beer filled the air! Out came the ruckus logs and they totally ate it up. THUD, THUD, THUD! Yaaaaaaaay! THUD, THUD, THUD! Yaaaaaaaay!

The entire day of cheap beer and silly yet grandiose Chicken gigs led up to this very graceful moment when I just sort of fell over and began flailing about, flinging my drums to various corners of the stage. The crowd begged for more, but I just sauntered over to the bar for my shift drink. There was Captain Foolhardy over one shoulder, "NEVER LEAVE'M SMILING, MY FRIEND! NEVER LEAVE'M SMILING!" Then I could see Keith Moon over my other shoulder saying, "RIGHT GOOD SHOW, CHAP! AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN USE NO TNT!" Then I could've sworn I saw the little Captain Foolhardy holding down the little Keith Moon while trying to fart on him. Yup, it was time to get home.

—At this time, Francis manages to spit the dirty sock out of his mouth and yell—

(Blaaaaaah! It's Todd! The Rhythm Chicken is Todd Taylor!!! — F.F.)

—The Rhythm Chicken then romantically shits in Francis' mouth—

Jestescie guwniaza! NEVER LEAVE'M SMILING!

—The Rhythm Chicken
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com



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GARY HORNBERGER

SQUEEZE MY HORN

WHAT THE HELL WAS THIS GUY DOING AT A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION FOR LEARNING IF HE HAS TROUBLE WITH A ONE-PARAGRAPH PAPER?

Spring is here, I've been waiting patiently for baseball to begin, and then they go and ruin it for me with scandal. It all revolves around those muscle-bulking products called steroids. A few years back we, in jest, called anyone who was giant in stature a 'roid user. Now it seems we may have been right. These wonder size-makers have been around for years. Back in the mid-eighties, one of my fellow workers came across them. He was a good-sized kid, over six feet and around two hundred pounds. He quit the job, nobody saw him for a couple months, then he showed up at a company softball game and the guy had no neck. I mean massive! He was all of seven-teen! This guy did this supposedly to get girls, but I don't know if it worked, because he still couldn't beat the skinny, drug-poppin', pizza-eating arm wrestling guy at the pizza joint we frequented after games. Also, for some inexplicable reason his skin turned orange. So yeah, I think steroids are bad, maybe even cheating, but the buzz it's creating is going to kill the game.

Most of my depression is with the treatment the *LA Times* sports writer Bill Plaschke has given Mark McGwire. It seems that Mr. Plaschke has taken it upon himself to rewrite our legal system. He states quite clearly that when McGwire comes up for Hall of Fame voting, he will not be giving McGwire the nod, simply because McGwire would not say to the US Senate that he had never taken steroids, nor did he tell them that he had. He simply said he was no longer playing and it had no bearing on him. So, according to Plaschke, because he didn't tell them he had never taken steroids, he must have. Guilty before proven innocent, right, Bill! He further goes on to say that he will give the nod to Barry Bonds because Bonds had the stats back when he was a skinny kid in Pittsburgh. What an ass! Whoever decided that these opinionated writers were the judges and jury for who goes into the Hall of Fame must have been high on

some illegal substance themselves.

Here's my twist on the whole thing. First, Plaschke is comparing the long haul of their careers, and he states that McGwire never had a fifty-home-run year prior to 1996. But he had forty-nine in his rookie year, which just happens to be a record, so should we take that away from him? As for Bonds, his numbers have shot so far out of this

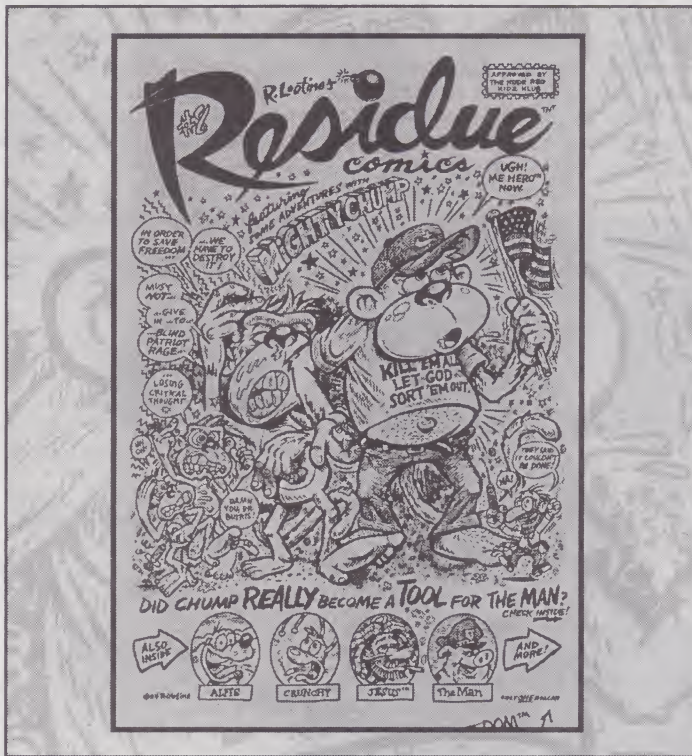
they aren't saying anything, are they guilty too, Bill?

I also must interject: Has steroids ever gotten a World Series ring for any of these guys? The Senate committee asked McGwire if he felt that he had kept honesty and integrity in the sport. What a loaded question to pose to a professional athlete. That goes beyond the realm of steroid usage. How can you ask

Sure, I'm biased when it comes to sports, but how many purists are there? They certainly aren't local paper writers or, for that matter, state senators. Baseball is about money, plain and simple. Long gone are the days of sandlots and schoolyards, playing the games in jeans and Chucks. No, we have leagues for kids so we can scout talent and give rewards for physical ability.

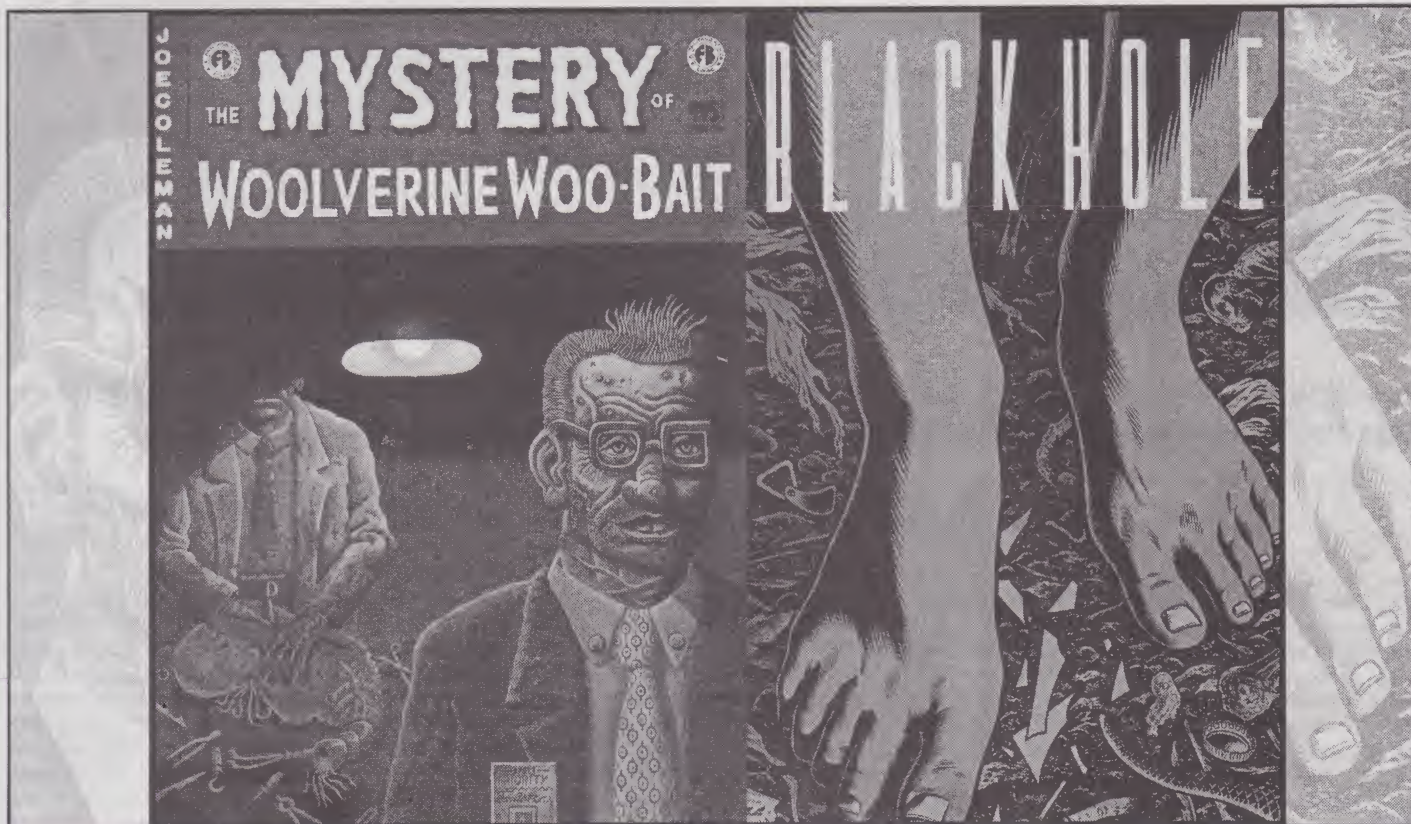
Speaking of which, here's another spot for a personnel experience. In college, I had to take an interdisciplinary course, Theory of Play. I was in this class with several guys from the baseball team. The class was basically writing with one presentation. It was meant to be easy, yet in the first week one of the players was taken a side by the professor who suggested that the player get help because his one-paragraph paper was of low standards. What the hell was this guy doing at a four-year institution for learning if he has trouble with a one-paragraph paper? Probably on a scholarship for baseball. Should that make the other students, who worked their asses off and had to pay thousands, mad? Damn right.

I guess to sum things up: I like baseball, I like most sports, but I'm not real hip on where we put our praise for them or our dissatisfaction of people in and around it. Bill Plaschke isn't an idiot; he's just opinionated to a point where, because of the power he holds, he's a little blind. On the plus side, I was happy to see his article on the eighty-six-year-old man who is protesting the Dodger organization for creating new seats in front of his season seats that he's had since day one of Dodger stadium and that the organization wants him to pay more for his seats. That's the kind of stance a sportswriter should take, standing up for the regular Joe. So yeah, I'll be there for opening day but don't think I'll be sitting in the expensive seats, and don't tell me that my favorite players are trying to cheat when all anybody wants is to see their team win, and, perhaps, go home with a souvenir.



world that his stats are superhuman. McGwire decided to hang it up early; he was still hitting the long ball, but he wasn't motivated to be the number one home-run hitter of all time. He and Sammy Sosa gave baseball one of the most amazing seasons ever, whereas Bonds pisses and moans that people are racists and he's being treated unfairly, yet he really wants the accolades. Also, why is it that only home run hitters are involved in this mess? I don't see slap hitters like Boggs and Gwynn being called in, and since

about integrity when these guys are getting paid millions to play a game that is fun for, say, nine months out of the year, while the fan is nine-to-five with perhaps two weeks off a year? These guys make in a year what companies pay to hundreds of employees in annual payrolls. So tell me again about integrity. How many of these guys cheat on their spouses? Integrity? In fact, a few years ago, baseball juiced up the ball so fans could see more scoring, so why not juice up the player? It worked, didn't it?



A LITTLE KID SAYS, "MOMMY, GOD SEZ WE SHOULD NOT KILL, AN' WE GOTTA LOVE OUR ENEMIES TOO," AND THE MOM SAYS, "FRET NOT, DANNY, WE DON'T HAVE TO OBEY GOD'S LAW BECAUSE WE'RE FIGHTING TERROR."

RESIDUE #8
By R. Lootine
\$1.00 U.S.

Political comics know no bounds, whether they are animal, insect, or human. That's because the characters in *Residue* comics are all of the above. In this issue we find our hero chump strapped to a table, ready to become a Republican defender of democracy. The only way to save the chump is with a big fatty provided by none other than Jesus. This comic so justly serves notice that what our present government institution is doing is not just wrong, it's comical. What other comic has GW dressed as king with an evil terrorist skewered on the end of his staff spear of justice or Rummy getting beheaded for his known unknown speech? Take those political cartoons you read in the opinion section, bloody them up like an Arnie movie, and you've got *Residue*. My favorite panel is "Target of Opportunity," where a little kid says, "Mommy, God sez we should not kill, an' we gotta love our enemies too," and the mom says, "Fret not, Danny, we don't have to obey God's law because we're fighting terror." Now, you tell me is that just not the truth. (Residue Comics, PO Box 580848, Minneapolis, MN 55458)

HOLY MOLY
By Leah Hayes
\$4.95 U.S.

This is a very bizarre collection set to the feel of a composition book. The incredible art seems to be done on lined paper. It gives one the feel of daydreaming during class in high school while some teacher is off reading nothing from their history book. Read this one while flying a kite or sitting under a tree on a warm sunny day, preferably with a big, fat joint. There is no story here; just strange, undulating forms professing a babble of youth and love. For me, this was hard to sift through since there was no storyline. I often feel my time is wasted, but the visual is so strange one can get caught in a trance. No, I think I'll stick with, "It was a waste of my time," but that's not to say you won't like it. (Holy Moly Inc., 220 Grand St., Brooklyn, NY 11211)

BLACKHOLE #12
By Charles Burns
\$5.95 U.S.

Blackhole is where I am after I read these. I always feel remorse to a point of downright depression. These misfit kids, some with boils, some that look like animals, and some just normal, seem to run amok in back woods and flop houses. This one is basically about one

girl's plight to find a lost love and defend love and friendship while being totally alone. Once again, a comic with piercing art and a troubling storyline. If you like the Cure, this comic is for you. (Fantagraphics Books, Inc., 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle WA 98115)

THE MYSTERY OF WOOLVERINE WOO-BAIT
By Joe Colman
\$4.95 U.S.

Take Elvira's movie macabre, add some sex, and you have this here comic. I haven't seen this much shoved into a can of pulp in a while: mad scientists, crazies, carneys, aliens, voodoo, and the military, and to anyone or thing I forgot I apologize. I'd have to reread it several times just to explain it, and no, I'm not going to do that for all of you. Let's just say the combination of still photos and drawings lead to a creepy story. It's murder, monsters, and mystery all in one. This comic makes you read, with plenty of fun before and after. Come on people, *Woolverine Woo-Bait*: what a great fucking name for a comic! (Fantagraphics Books)

BELLY BUTTON COMIX #2
By Sophie
\$4.95 U.S., \$7.95 CAN

Got half way through and gave up. Just can't read personal experience comics about people and their poor choices. Enough said!

LAGWAGON LIVE IN A DIVE

Once again, we have a winner! Fat Wreck Chords has put out another fantastic "punk band goes to the comics" comic book. The art in these comics rivals DC or Marvel and the stories are a blast, creative as can be. In this comic we find a group of girls telling stories of what the guys in the band have deviously been up to. One is a gasman that blows things up, another a milkman who milks his dog and sells it, and we wrap up the rest as a scientist, a professor, and a butcher. In the end, one of the girls who is overstimulated by the band bludgeons the other girls for telling her that the band sucks. Murder and monstrous laughs is what the "Live in a Dive" series is about. I just wish they would price these little bastards, because I've never seen them at the comic's shops. Hey, Fat Mike, keep cranking these things out. You've got a gold mine. (Fat Wreck Chords, PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119)

—Gary Hornberger

GARY HORNBERGER





DESIGNATED DALE

I'M AGAINST IT

I'm speaking of CBGB, one of the most immortal locations that unexpectedly nurtured a few of punk rock's biggest influences to be.

And it might be closing for good.

There's been a situation of serious concern brewing down on the Bowery in NYC lately. And, no, I ain't talking about those hideous exterior remodels that've been slapped over some of the old apartment buildings in this area (the ugly, glaring white paint jobs sticking out like dandruff on a black t-shirt...ca-cal!). No, the item of concern I'm talking about is located on 315 Bowery Street, planted on the first floor of the building that it's connected to: a dingy, rundown dive bar that spawned unto rock and roll as what Bethlehem spawned unto those of the Christian faith. I'm speaking of CBGB (Country Bluegrass Blues), one of the most immortal locations that unexpectedly nurtured a few of punk rock's biggest influences to be. And it might be closing for good.

Club owner Hilly Kristal has been captain of this ship for over thirty years, opening it up in the early '70s when it was but a local slum area bar at the time that had

winos nodding off inside and out, centered in an area of the city that your regular nightlife folk wouldn't choose to frequent. Even the Hells Angels were soon hanging out at CB's, adding to the colorful ruckus that would occur. With all this going on, the place almost sounded like an over-sized, seedy public bathroom in a not-so-friendly park, complete with a stage and liquor license. The dogs that wandered in and out, leaving stinky piles of shit on the saw dusted barroom floor, only added to CB's grittiness. It was a near-perfect place for part of the next generation of rock'n'roll to germinate and blossom.

Musically, Kristal's club was originally a place for locals to watch live bands, usually performing country, and to catch neighborhood poetry readings. This all was about to get turned upside down when a band named Television convinced Hilly to let them play, eventually performing regularly on Sunday nights. At this point, Television had got their foot in the

door, leaving a small opening for bands like Talking Heads, Blondie, and the Ramones to come busting through. The floodgates were open and CB's soon became the place for all the local acts to try and get some attention, and a handful of bands succeeded doing so in spades.

The Ramones were one of the most prominent bands to get some of that attention, and eventually struck up a deal with Sire Records for years to come as a result of it. Soon after, Cleveland-to-NYC transplants the Dead Boys also landed a record deal with Sire. Even their *Young, Loud, and Snotty* LP boasts "A CBGB Production," this being that Kristal was the Dead Boys manager at the time, not to mention one of the record's cuts, "Hey Little Girl" was recorded live at his club. In the years to follow, CBGB went on to be a club hosting bands following in the footsteps of their punk predecessors, an institution for van-traveling bands to set up camp for the night (or weekend). In the last couple of months, the

word was out that CB's owed over ninety grand in back rent, Hilly pointing out that the discrepancy was due to a bookkeeping fuckup. Add to that, Kristal's lease is up in August, and he's expecting his monthly rent of \$19,000 to at least double, yes, *double*. The current landlord holding a forty-five-year lease on the place, Muzzy Rosenblatt, understands the situation but nonetheless wants his money. Besides being the building landlord where CB's is the only commercial space under his jurisdiction, Rosenblatt is also executive director of the Bowery Residents' Committee. The matter has gone to court. Rosenblatt has no intentions of renewing CB's lease unless the current money matter is resolved, in addition to straightening out Hilly's alleged failure to repair code violations in the club.

"Show me you can meet your current obligations, and then we'll talk about new ones," says Rosenblatt, speaking of Kristal's situation. "His destiny is in his own

Abbreviated CBGB Timeline

- The site of CBGB was the bar for The Palace Hotel, the largest flophouse in The Bowery, "the world's most famous skid row."
- In December of 1973, CBGB was opened by Hilly Kristal. The club's live entertainment featured folk and jazz artists.
- CBGB stands for Country Bluegrass Blues. Its motto, OMFUG, stands for Other Music for Uplifting Gormandizers. A gormandizer is a glutton, a greedy person who eats a lot of food.
- Television was one of the first non-folk, non-jazz bands to play and Hilly thought they sucked something fierce. He vowed they'd never play CBGBs ever again. Television's

manager, Terry Ork, persuaded Hilly to reverse his threat. Television's music didn't piss everyone off. It provided inspiration for a nascent, close-knit art crowd. Patti Smith wrote the first press review of Television for the *Soho Weekly News* in June of 1974. Hilly allowed Television to play again, the next time with a band called The Ramones on the same bill.

- The Ramones were just starting out, and they were chaotic. Strings broke, fights broke out between band members, they stopped playing several times, and the show was a mess, yet Hilly saw something in them and invited them back. The Ramones would end up playing CBGBs over a hundred times in their long career.

- During 1974, CBGB was one of the only rock clubs open in New York City. Disco reigned

supreme. It became a haven for rock'n'rollers to get away from the satin-panted, flared bottomed, "mirrored ball in the sky trying to hypnotize you that it all didn't suck" of disco. Hilly was one of the few bookers who would allow musicians without recording contracts to play his club.

- At the request of Joey Ramone in 1976, The Dead Boys played CBGBs.

- Within a few years, an explosion called punk rock was felt the world over. It happened in New York and one of the indisputable epicenters was CBGBs. The Stilletoes (who would go on to reform as Blondie), The Talking Heads, Tuff Darts, Iggy Pop, The New York Dolls, the Heartbreakers, MC 5, and literally thousands of other bands would go on to play its stage.



Illustration by Rob Ruelas: s_zamora0727@hotmail.com

hands." When Hilly was recently asked of the current happenings, he replied, "I'm energized. I'm going to fight." From what's been gathered, this hasn't been the first time Hilly's had to go to bat to preserve CB's. The rent problem dates back five years, when the committee went to court to collect more than \$300,000 in back rent from his club. The funny thing is that Rosenblatt's group houses 250 homeless people above CBGB. This is the same club that was connected to the same building that was once in the middle of a stumbling drunk, drug-infested crime neighborhood. And please note that I'm not calling any or all homeless folk this. It just smacks a little ironic, that's all.

Rosenblatt estimates the committee has spent \$50,000 in legal fees and expenses to collect back rent from the club and to force Kristal to bring his space up to code, taking money away from the homeless: "I will not subsidize CBGB's at the expense of the homeless. I can't allow my own sentimentality to impede our ability to serve homeless people." The sentiment he speaks of is about how he and his future wife shared their first kiss inside the club, but quickly adds that nostalgia won't keep its doors open.

I'm curious to know where Rosenblatt's getting the cashola to keep a roof over 250 people's heads. I think it's safe to say he's not cutting a personal check for the

homeless peeps' rent. If he is, I know quite a few people that would love to thank him for his crash-pad generosity. Over ten years ago, Hilly was kicking around the idea of buying the building himself, but couldn't raise the four million dollars to get the deed in his possession. Most of the money he pulls in now is from t-shirt and merch sales, although the club still has shows going on all week long. (By the way, OMFUG, which is usually printed on all of their t-shirts, stands for: Other Music for Uplifting Gormandizers.)

Recently, Kristal's been mulling over different options, including turning CBGB into a museum during the day, which seems like a good idea, because

I've also been thinking about something along the same lines since all this went down. Here are my thoughts: across the country, there have been many historical landmarks preserved and protected over the years. There are the acres of national parks, famous old churches, and even early American structures like houses, stores, postal annexes, school buildings, ranches and such that are pieces of history for people all over the world to see on their visits and travels.

Keeping this in mind, remember that landmarks mean a whole lot to some and even less to others. To some, CB's is an old dive bar they could give two shits about whether or not it shuts down, and that's fine if some

SWIRLING HARDCORE WITH TONS OF GROOVE AND ENERGY... IT HAS THE DRIVE AND PASSION OF BANDS LIKE PANTHRO UK UNITED 13 OR GUNMOLL BUT WITH MORE BILE, ANGER AND HARDCORE CHOPS. THIS FUCKING RULES!

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feel that way. I can respect that. Why? Because I feel the same way about a lot of the missions up and down the California coast. As beautiful as they are, they're nothing more than a reminder that some over-zealous Spanish "visi-

this case, a bonafide Mecca in the history of rock and roll. Quite simply, CB's should become a historical landmark if Hilly is denied to renew his lease later this year, and it'd be great if any city, county, or government affiliate with the state

is to let a piece of American history be wiped away like splattered bugs off a windshield. And even if you aren't a fan or even slight admirer of what CBGB's helped nurture, it is an important part of American music history, and no

ready to go ahead with a \$720 million dollar deal to develop a brand new 75,000 seat football stadium on Manhattan's West Side.

I really do wish all the best for Hilly and hope that by the time this

CBGB's is an important part of American music history, and no part of history should be left alone to be forgotten.



tors" who dropped anchor off the west coast and made their religion the "right" way of worship to the indigenous folk who were already there, fully content with their own ways of worship.

But then there are those of us who live by the music we listen to. Like the air we breathe or the food and drink we ingest without a second thought, music is a daily part of our diets. And when some of that music's history (far influential music, mind you) had its humble beginnings in a place like CBGB's years ago, that place can be perceived as sacred ground to some, just as what I mentioned about the city of Bethlehem earlier, but in

of New York would seriously consider making it a reality, if need be. Financially, it's hard to believe that the city of New York would have any difficulty buying the building outright. The club space itself could be preserved as-is while other parts of the building could be made into a museum of sorts, complete with associated artifacts and photo galleries featuring different work of the club's past. Hilly could even continue on with his souvenir gift shop in the gallery space next door, although keeping the bars open in both spaces might be questionable.

The whole idea may seem lame to some, but think how much lamier it

part of history should be left alone to be forgotten.

There have been reports of people all over asking what they can do since CB's has been faced with its uncertain future. One example is Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban offering a substantial cash donation, saying that the club is an icon of the New York music scene. I would hope that a certain Mr. Steinbrenner, owner of a baseball team called the New York Yankees, resonates the same sentiment. Like I said a few sentences ago, it's hard to argue the financial problem NYC faces to make CBGB a historical landmark when the owners of the NY Jets are

goes to print that the matter is on its way to getting resolved, ending in CB's business as usual, or something along the lines of the above suggestions. Steps away down the sidewalk from CB's entrance, there's the adjoining corner intersection of E 2nd & Bowery, and not too long ago, the city officially renamed E 2nd Street as Joey Ramone Place. Remember that. There's a supreme overlying reason for it.

I'm Against It
—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com



DESIGNATED DALE

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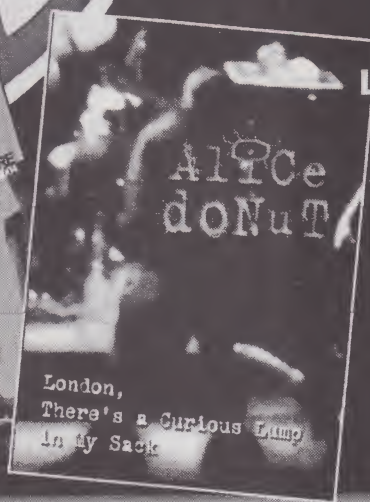
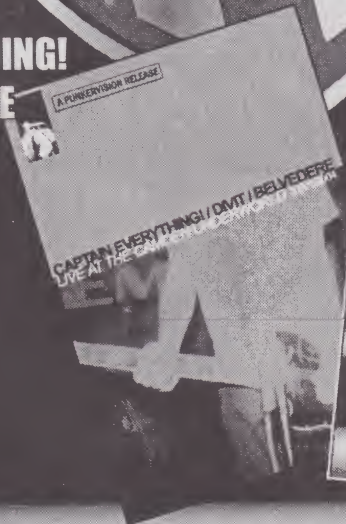
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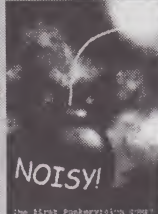


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NOMEANSNO HANSON BROTHERS WOULD WE BE... LIVE?

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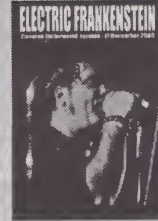
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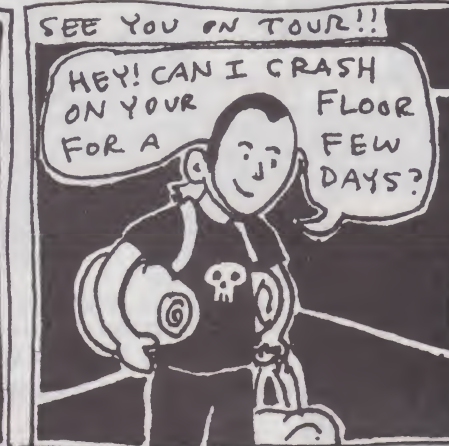
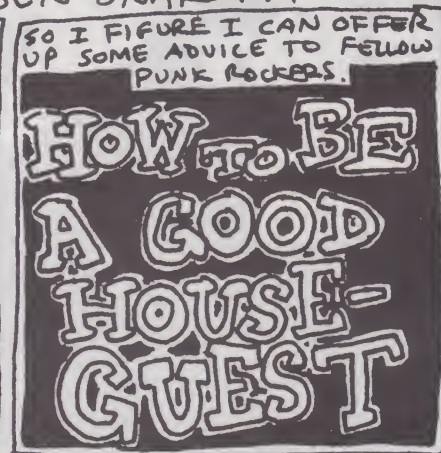
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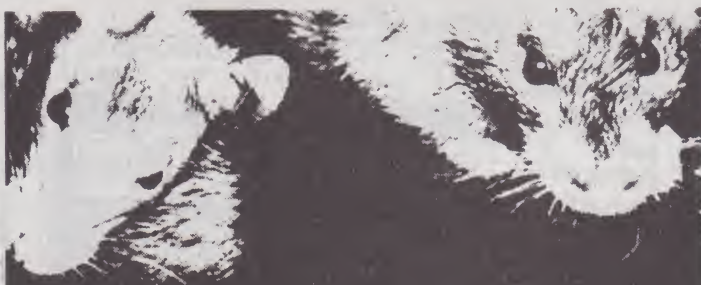


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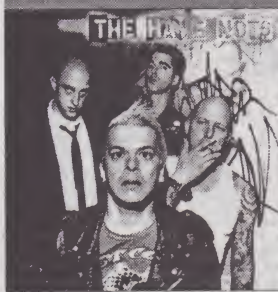
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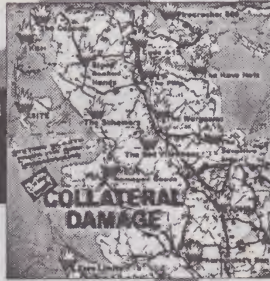


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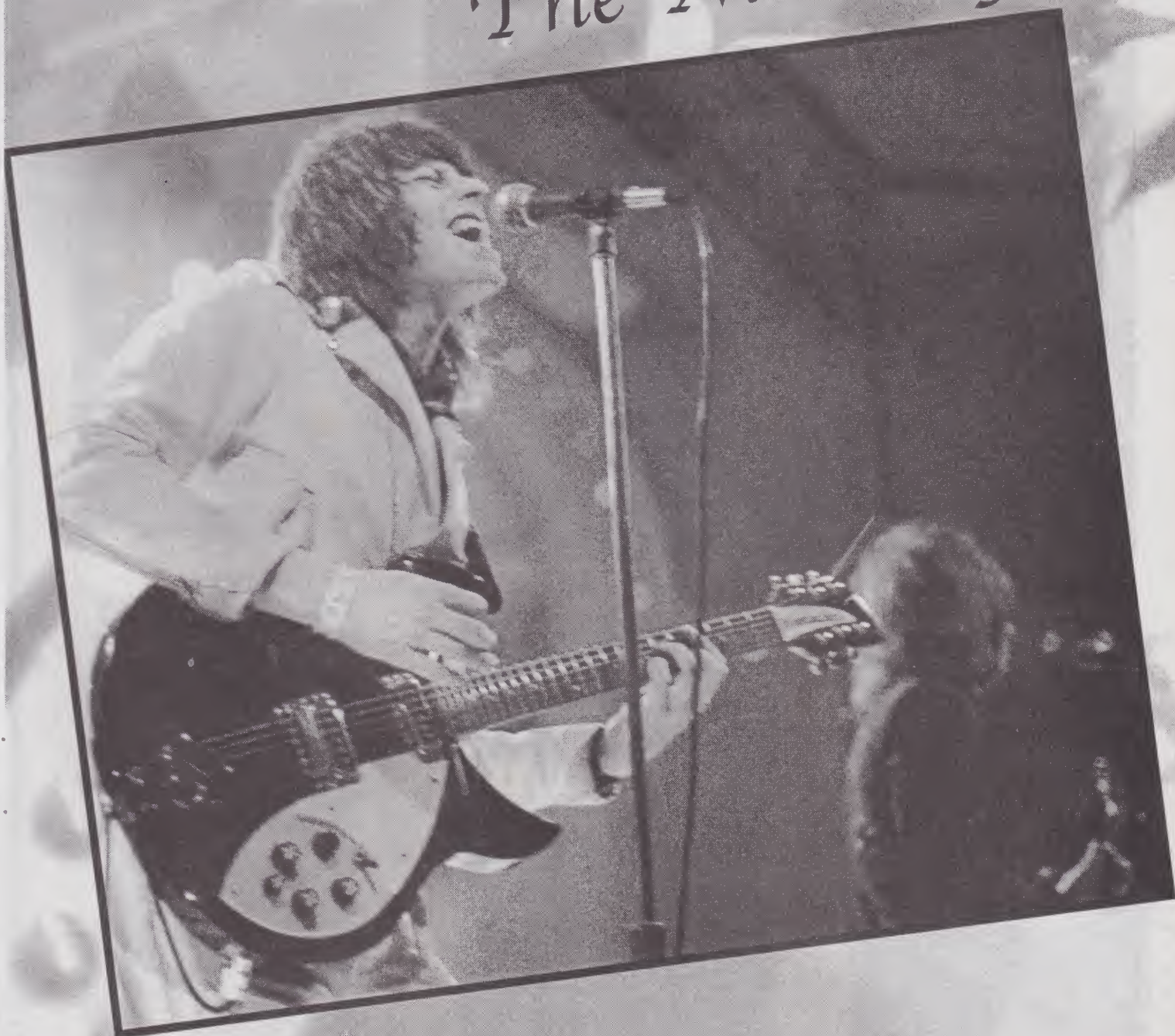


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Chrystae Branchaw's
Photo Page

The Nice Boys



THIS IS MY FIST!



Interview by Todd and Josh
Original Artwork by Keith Rosson

Photos by Niki Pretti, Josh Stein, and Todd Taylor



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This Is My Fist is kind of a tough band to describe, not because they're wholly unique and free of influences, but because the easiest description doesn't sound very appealing. Say it out loud to yourself: "They're a punk band, sorta poppy, pretty mid-tempo, and a lady sings for 'em." You just described eight thousand bands, many of whom aren't terribly interesting, and it would be a disservice to lump a band as good as **This Is My Fist** in with them. The melodies are warm and fuzzy, but also barbed and rough, like they could be total sweethearts but still stand up for themselves if it were necessary. The vocals are tuneful but still scratchy, like Annie has seen her share of whiskey and cigarettes. Todd and Will bang out rhythms reminiscent of Bay Area forebears like Crimpshrine and Shotwell, and the whole affair wouldn't sound out of place in a basement or a living room on a hot summer night, where beer's getting spilled on the wall, lamps are getting knocked over, and you're having the time of your life.

Todd Taylor: Would you say that bad luck is a theme of this band?

Annie: In physical terms, yes. There have been a lot of times where we couldn't get our shit together or our van breaks down on the way to the recording studio, all those kind of things. But if I really think about it, no, because we've been together for almost three years. We like each other and we have good times, so I think actually we're really lucky. We've outlived the standard two and a half years for a punk band.

Todd Taylor: So you guys broke down in Vacaville, is that right?

Will: Yeah, we broke down in Vacaville, this cow town. It's the home of Papa Roach. We picked that place to have the van break down.

Todd Taylor: And you were on the way to record with Chris Woodhouse?

Will: Yeah, we were going to do a full-length record with Chris, who did the Bananas, the A Frames, and the FM Knives.

Todd Siemens: Except that we had taken the wrong highway, so we weren't exactly going straight to Chris's house. We were going a little bit north, in case anyone's wondering about the geography of the situation.

Will: I think a hose broke. I got to work under the hood while Annie and Todd kinda sat around.

Annie: What?! Eff you! Let me tell you what really happened. I was standing there elbow deep in the van's guts and Tony, Will, and Todd were all on their cell phones, laying down on the curb.

Todd Siemens: That's not true. I helped a lot.

Will: Todd did help. Me and Tony sat and bummed out by the soda machine.

Annie: You went into the store for me. Thank you. It was just a busted hose. Had I had any tools with me, it would have been thirty minutes and we would have been on our way, but instead it took over two hours. I was working with a razorblade and needlenose pliers. You kinda had to laugh at the circumstances.

Todd Siemens: The drunk guy from the bar across the street telling us

what he thought was wrong with the car, that was definitely funny.

Josh: So what's kept you guys going through all the bad luck and van breakdowns and all that?

Annie: A lot of beer.

Will: Neil Young. I'm going to marry into his family.

Annie: Beer. Arguments about Will's musical taste.

Todd Taylor: A more technical question. The name of the band comes from a Comsomal Diaries song. What were some other lyrics from the Comsomal Diaries that you could have used? Didn't they have a song called "If Art Could Kill Jesse Luscious"?

Will: Really?

Annie: I've never heard that. I would be offended because he's a friend of mine. I'd have to beat them up or something.

Will: I think we could have used any lyric that didn't automatically get us mixed up with This Bike Is a Pipebomb. I love This Bike Is a Pipebomb and we're fine with being grouped in with them, but people think we're going to be poseurs and we're not.

Annie: Plus, we used to have an exclamation point on the end of our name.

Will: People thought we were trying to copy Against Me! Again, I dig Against Me! a lot, but they can't have the monopoly on the exclamation point. Who's to say we didn't get it from !!! or Ornette Coleman?

Annie: Apparently, that makes you a Florida band if you've got an exclamation point at the end of your name.

Todd Taylor: Has the name given you guys any trouble?

Annie: They think we're a hardcore band.

Will: Which is fine.

Todd Taylor: What about Canada? Have you had any trouble getting into Canada?

Todd Siemens: We didn't have any trouble getting into Canada because of the name. We had trouble getting into Canada because the border patrol were assholes.

Annie: And they were drunk.

Todd Siemens: Both sides were drunk. [laughter]

Annie: We got turned away from the border because we only had driver's licenses. We didn't have birth certificates.

Todd Siemens: And that was our fault.

Will: And because Annie looked like a mischievous six-year-old when they were questioning her. If I had been driving, we would have gotten through no problem.

Annie: We tried to be honest and say we're just going to play a party, which was true, and we got turned away. So we dumped off our equipment in Bellingham, Washington. When we went back in, they gave us grief. When we were coming out of Canada, the guy reeked of tequila and was trying to give us a hard time about getting back into America. It was just a lot of posturing on the side of the border patrol, keeping us there and laughing at us while we sat there.

Todd Siemens: We all actually wore about three or four of our shirts into Canada so we could sell them once we got there.

Josh: What made you want to move from Chicago to San Francisco?

Annie: I was getting ready to move to Asheville, North Carolina. My friends Lynn and Jason are

I'm not
expecting some
total sexist bro
at a show to walk
away like, "Hmmm.
maybe I should be
a little more
sensitive."

out there and we were going to play. I was getting ready to move there and me and the fellow I was dating decided to just go to Reno and get hitched, like kind of a joke. Funny.

Todd Taylor: It's a good time.

Annie: It's probably the biggest regret I have in my life and he was actually a really abusive creep, but luckily, I met Todd amidst all the chaos of that and we started playing together. It was totally therapeutic to get out of the house and go somewhere.

Todd Taylor: So did you get married?

Annie: Yeah, I got married. And promptly divorced.

Todd Taylor: The wonders of Nevada.

Josh: Why do you think people kind of flock to the Bay Area?

Annie: I think that, at least for people in the Midwest, you

"We don't suck. We're actually pretty good." I've said that several times in the last month.

viewing it as just the music and the stuff that comes out. I think a lot of people spend a lot of time trying to leave the Bay Area.

Will: It's more like later-era Fifteen songs and lots of fog.

Todd Siemens: There's no *Duct Tape Soup* demos piping through Safeway.

Annie: But there's a lot of creative shit going on and it's really amazing. There's a lot of stuff there that you can't find anywhere.

Will: The Bay Area pretty much has anything you want. Any subculture, there's at least two hundred people involved with it. Scientologist transsexual capoeira youth group—two hundred members. I was born in San Francisco and I've lived there my whole life and have a hard time ever leaving. But there's a lot of shit talking between the subdivisions, and I gladly

partake.

Annie: Or area codes.

Will: Yeah, or however you can divide yourselves.

Todd Siemens: Which is the most important part about music, by the way.

Will: If we all got along, it wouldn't be punk. To rip an old Yiddish saying from an article my pops sent me, "If you open your mind too much, your brain will fall out."

Todd Taylor: How would you explain to somebody over the age of forty-five who has no bearing on punk rock what your band's about?

Will: I've been doing this recently because of the people I work with. It usually comes up like, "Oh, you're in a band? What are you guys called?" "This Is My Fist. We don't suck. We're actually pretty good." I've said that several times in the past month.

Annie: "We're also brilliant and very strong." [laughter] Whenever I go home for the holidays, which I haven't in a long time, inevitably, they'll go, "Oh, you still play music? So when are you going to be on MTV?" Then I have to explain why I don't want to do that. It's hard, because when people start asking you that stuff, it's like a little kid going, "Why? Why? Why?" You have to keep explaining it even though it's in your head perfectly. You can't pin down punk for any person. My version of punk is so different from Will's, but essentially we're all working for the same thing. We play because we like it. As long as it's fun, we keep doing it. My favorite thing about independent punk rock is just the network. I've said that a million times. I know the same people in Georgia or New York that my friend in Maine knows. It's amazing. This whole network that has its own magazines... *Book Your Own Fuckin' Life*, if that actually worked well and half the places weren't shut down by the time the print version came out, it would be the most perfect thing in the world. It's hard to explain that to someone who makes a weekly trip to Costco.

Josh: There's a line in one of your songs that goes, "Why not try and find a real job?" Well, why not? What's kept you from doing that?

Annie: The band. Being in a band and touring for the past ten years has kept me in an unstable working condition. I'll leave any job to go on tour because that's what I really want to do. My parents are really supportive, but at the same time, they're like, "You know, if you were just at a job for five years, you wouldn't be so hand-to-mouth." But I'd rather do what I want and live hand-to-mouth than be stuck in a cubicle and not have anything to look forward to.

Will: Instead, she's picking maggots out of a dog's butt with tweezers.

Annie: I express the anal glands of dogs.

Todd Taylor: What exactly does that entail?



always have this romanticized idea about it, like so many great bands come from there. You just imagine it as this punk rock paradise, where everything is just Crimpshrine songs and sunshine, but then you get there and the scene is so massive that it's hard to make friends with anybody. It's not as close knit as you think. In Chicago, I knew everyone. I had been going to shows with them since I was a wee teenager, and it's actually a relatively small community as far as punk goes. I think the Bay Area is different when you actually live there than when you're thousands of miles away and kind of

Annie: Dogs and cats have anal glands. If you imagine the asshole as a clock...

Todd Siemens: Which we all do...

Annie: At four and eight o'clock are these little scented musk glands. They fill up, and when the animal poops, that's what gives each animal's poop its own stink for territory reasons. But sometimes those glands don't express on their own, so the dogs will start scooting around on their butts and leaving little brown streaks on the rug. You have to go in there with a lubed finger and milk the glands and it's really disgusting and I have to do it probably ten times a day. It's the worst smell I've ever smelled and I always have to do it.

Todd Taylor: What has influenced you to play the music that you play? Music's awesome, it's great, but for it to have some resonance after you unplug it, there has to be something that's motivating you.

Will: It was Le Tigre. They're the ones who got us into playing music. [At this point, there is even more laughter than there was during the talk about poop.]

Todd Siemens: In broad, cheesy terms, basically just existing in the environment that we do and the way I interpret it when I walk around and see what's going on or watch the news. You want to have hope and encourage the people around you, and that leads to playing either folk music or this kind of music. Obviously, you want to do that within your own confines, which I'm sure everyone who would read this already understands. The music: I don't think Annie and I really talked about it when we started playing.

Annie: I think when I was fifteen, I knew that the government sucked, but now that I'm thirty, I know why the government sucks. I tend to write about stuff that affects me mentally—whatever is sticking in my craw and bugging me—so it's either something really happy or something extremely agitating. I'm not trying to change the world, and I wouldn't be so pompous to think that my music is going to change something. I have to express these things, and it's either going to be through this or boxing. [laughs] There's got to be some outlet for what's going on right now.

Josh: If you could take any book that you had to read in high school and replace it with any book you wanted, what would that be?

Will: The shit that I was supposed to read in high school, I didn't read. I was busy reading *Flipside* or *Calvin and Hobbes*.

Todd Taylor: So what would you have replaced it with?

Will: I would keep it exactly the same but I would have actually read it. I think there were a lot of good books that I should have read but didn't.

Annie: I probably would have replaced *Travels with Charley* with *Travels with Lizbeth* by Lars Eighner. It's my favorite book. It's about this guy who's homeless and has to travel between Austin and California a couple of times. He has several chances to get out of the situation, but it would be at the cost of giving up his dog and he doesn't want to do that. It's a great book and it's way more interesting than *Travels with Charley*.

Todd Taylor: I love Steinbeck, but *Travels with Charley*'s not so good.

Todd Siemens: On the same token, I would have replaced *The Grapes of Wrath* with *Tortilla Flat*.

Will: I'd put in the one with John Malkovich in it.

Todd Taylor: [to Will]

Wouldn't you put Haruki Murakami in

there at all?

Will: I love *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicles*, but at the same time, I probably would have just read *Come as You Are* a few less times.

Todd Taylor: Think back to five or ten years ago and how you dealt with anger and how it compares to how you deal with anger now. I'm taking cues off Annie from when she was in *Ambition Mission* and she wrote the lyrics, "Look at me one more time like that and I'll smash your face in." And now in the song "Your Filth, My Fury," it goes, "I'm not the one that's so fucked up/Not too much anyhow," which is kind of an inversion of anger.

Annie: I have to say that that line in the *Ambition Mission* song was more of an inner dialogue of what would be going on in my head, because I've never hit anybody out of anger in my life.

Todd Siemens: Just for fun.

Will: Ten years ago I probably would've punched the person, whereas now I'd just pull my Walther on them and be done with it.

Annie: I've never been in a fight with anyone. I just think that's the wrong way to go. But I definitely think in my head that I want to kick someone's ass or whatever. How do I deal with anger? I get into internet fights on message boards. Just kidding! Totally kidding. [laughter] I just



talk about stuff.

Todd Siemens: I think that, over time, you realize that you're also flawed and that helps to deal with anger. I guess just thinking more about why you're angry can help to work through those ideas.

Will: I have a story... oh, I saw it on a TV show. [laughter]

Annie: "Oh wait, that was *Superman III*."

Todd Siemens: Will deals with anger by blurring the lines between reality and fiction. [laughter]

Todd Taylor: What's the funniest thing you've seen when you've done a Google search for your name?

Will: "This is my fist attempt at making a webpage" or anything Aerosmith related.

Annie: "This is my fist attempt at creating an automated robot."



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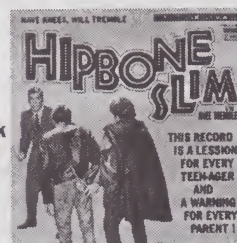
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JOHN SCHOOLEY

Annie:
Imagine the
asshole as a clock...
Todd: Which we
all do...
Annie: At four and
eight o'clock
are the little
scented musk
glands.

**Todd
Siemens:**

That's the best
one. That's primarily
what comes up on Google searches, just mis-
spellings of "first."

Josh: Annie, what's the name of your dog?

Annie: I only have one dog now and that's Stiles and
she is the absolute love of my life. She keeps me
going through everything.

Will: What about the other one?

Annie: I had another dog named Fischer and unfor-
tunately he bit someone very badly. I have a big
thing with human aggression in pets and I actually
found him a different home where he's not in an
urban environment. He lives with a rad old guy with
a peg leg. It was really sad and I still don't like talk-
ing about it.

Josh: Why did you name him after a Haymarket
Riot martyr?

Annie: He's named after Adolph Fischer, who was
one of the people that got hanged unjustly for the
Haymarket Riot. That's such a monumental event.

Learning about the Haymarket Riot was a turning point for me as to where
my passion lies. It turned me on to labor history. It turned me on to Emma
Goldman and Alexander Berkman and all these people, and I think Lucy
Parsons should be a saint, an official saint. It's such an important event
because it was this tragedy that innocent people were hanged for, not
because of what they did since they were pardoned for it, but because of
who they were: Eastern European, toothless masses, anarchists. It was just
upsetting what was going on in Chicago at that time. I'm not an anarchist,
but I totally believe in the ideals of anarchism.

Will: Why do you say that you're not an anarchist but you believe in anar-
chy?

Annie: I don't want to say that I'm anything.

Josh: It kind of paints you into a corner.

Will: But isn't that other people's fault for thinking that?

Annie: I don't truly think that if people didn't have government then they
would govern themselves properly. I think the natural greed of people
would keep that from happening. It's kind of a utopian ideal. All I can do
is work within my own life and do what I think is right by the ideals that
are expressed in anarchism. I do the layout for an anarchist newspaper and
it's been a lot of fun, but I don't think I'm in any position to say, "I'm an
anarchist." It's hard to say that living in a capitalist society. Like today, we
had to get a cooler so we could keep food in the van, and where else would
we get that? I just don't think I qualify to label myself as an anarchist.

Todd Siemens: I agree with what Annie said, and it's just like I'd hate
to have to call myself a Democrat or anything because I'd rather associ-
ate myself with other ideals. I refuse to align myself with any great
amount of people, not out of any sort of pompous ideal of myself, but
because I don't necessarily want to associate myself with a large ideal of
any sort.

Annie: There's a book called *Cuban Anarchism*, and on page five, there's
the most perfect explanation of anarchism I've ever read. It's beautiful,
concise, one page long. If you ever run across the book, it's so amazing
and I believe in those ideals, in treating people respectfully and giving if
I have and they don't, things like that.

Todd Taylor: Was it true that a plane actually brushed the top of the trees
at your house?

Annie: Yeah. We had a really tall red oak tree and our house was literal-
ly right below a flight pattern of O'Hare. One time a plane flew just a lit-



tle too low and knocked the top branches off the tree. It threw my mom
off the deep end. She just lost it that day.

Todd Siemens: You don't want to mess with Annie's mom.

Annie: I was in the back yard at the time, and I just remember being like,
"What... the... fuck..."

Will: Almost as dramatic is the time that a golf ball flew through the front
window of my house and broke the window.

Annie: After that, Will stopped wearing those funny plaid knickers.

Will: And I never ate a hummus sandwich again.

Todd Siemens: I can't wait for the editing.

Will: People are going to be like, "I thought this band was coherent."

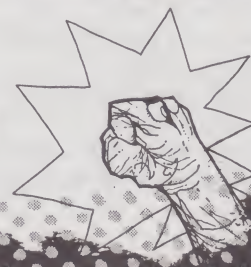
Todd Taylor: In a real, simple way, what do you want people to come
away with after listening to you guys?

Annie: I just hope that they like the music, and like I said, I'm not trying
to change anything. I'm not expecting some total sexist bro at a show to
walk away like, "Hmmm, maybe I should be a little more sensitive."

Todd Siemens: "I never thought that a girl could play guitar."

Annie: I just want someone to have fun. Other than that would be pure-
ly selfish for me.

This Is My Fist:
4830 Telegraph,
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The Chinese Telephones (or Chi-Tels as those in the know call them... okay nobody really calls them that except me) are a great melodic punk rock band from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Always a fan, I was shocked to see them after my band had met up with them on tour last month. A month of touring had turned them into one of the most finely tuned rockage machines this side of the Kinnickinnick River, or the other side for that matter. I've known these guys for years. Yet, there I was watching them in Austin, Texas with a new perspective, one I could only surmise was similar to how people react when hearing them for the first time. Their stompin' Tom rhythms, beautiful melodies, and sing-songy-with-just-a-hint-of-gruffness yelping, had me floored—and also ceilinged. They were full of energy too, and I'm sure Kevin will tell you the four Sparks he had that night were more of a hindrance than a means to that end. I wrote all these questions while I was driving (!) from Atlanta to Houston at eight in the morning while everyone else in my band slept. The Chi-Tels answered them twice as ridiculously as I had written them. Enjoy!

INTERVIEW BY DAN ZAJACKOWSKI

PHOTOS BY TODD TAYLOR AND KATHERINE SCHUMACHER

Justin: guitar, vocals • Daniel: guitar
 Andy: bass, vocals • Kevin: drums (normally it's Evan, but he's in Korea)

Zajackowski: Question number one: Is making a mixed tape for a girl you like passé?
Daniel: Definitely not.
Justin: Why would that be passé?
Zajackowski: 'Cause it's expected now. It's not special anymore.
Daniel: That's the only reason I talk to girls, so I can make mixed tapes for them.
Justin: It's not that expected. There are people around here that still make a lot of mixed tapes,

but across the whole country, there's a small percentage of people that still make mixed tapes. So it might be passé in this town, but overall I don't think so.
Daniel: Most people make mixed CDs now.
Andy: I was gonna get on that. I don't think they are. Tapes rule, and I've been noted in the past as being very apprehensive about the whole CD-R issue, but, I could make a girl a 250 song mp3 CD in a quarter of the time it would take me to make that mixed tape. And she can get full albums and singles and shit!
Daniel: Yeah, it takes at least three hours to make a ninety-minute mixed tape. It just proves

your admiration toward her that much more.
Andy: Yeah, mixed tapes are pretty cool.
Zajackowski: What is the recommended percentage of mushy love songs on such a tape?
Andy: I don't know if there necessarily is...
Daniel: That's entirely judged by the situation.
Zajackowski: Clearly, this is a girl who you really like. You want her to like you.
Daniel: I don't usually think about that when I make girls mixed tapes, though. It's generally what song I want to listen to at the time and what song I think that girl would like to listen to. I'm not a big lyric guy. I'm more of a music guy.

Julie
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Zajackowski: So you don't sneak in secret messages?

Andy: I think that's being too blatant.

Justin: You can't be too obvious about it and put tons of songs like "Ooh baby, baby, I love you."

Andy: I want her to know that "Mirage," the Tommy James and the Shondelles song (actually it was Ritchie Cordell that wrote the song), is on there not only because, yeah she's just a mirage, but that's a fucking amazing song, and that should override all this mushy shit.

Zajackowski: But there's lots of great songs that have, or are about, "I love you, baby, baby, baby, baby, baby, baby, I love you."

Justin: You can't blow it. You can't be of the mindset that the more songs like that, the more she'll like you.

Zajackowski: So, you're not going to put any mushy love songs on the tape at all?

Justin: No, no, no. I'm not saying "none."

Daniel: I'm not saying that.

Zajackowski: What's the percentage then?

Daniel: I'm saying that doesn't affect the tape making, really.

Zajackowski: Justin, you moved to Milwaukee from Dubuque, Iowa about a year ago. Not too long ago, touring bands usually skipped Milwaukee, but now it seems to have a reputation as one of the rockinest places to play. What do you like about Milwaukee?

Justin: So what originally drew me to this city was I had an old band, Hot Carl, and the other two people moved to Wisconsin. One moved to Madison, then Whitewater, and the other moved to Milwaukee. I had to decide between Whitewater and Milwaukee, but that's an easy choice. And I knew you Modern Machine fellows, so that helped out in meeting people when I moved here.

Daniel: Plus he's in love with me.

Justin: Yeah, and I'm in love with Dan.

Zajackowski: The question was actually, "What do you like about Milwaukee?"

Justin: I just love the fact that there are constantly basement shows. Actually there are a lot less basement shows now, and I go to a lot less of them since I started school, but I have the option of going to lots of basement shows and shows for really cheap. I'm not one of the people that will show up at the shows and be like "I have a nickel. Let me in."

Zajackowski: If you've got a nickel, won't you lay your money down?

Justin: Yes.

Zajackowski: CCR reference.

Justin: I understand this. There are so many people that are into the same kind of music as me, and there aren't in Dubuque, Iowa. There are lots more shows to go to, and things like that, so of course I'm gonna like it a lot better here. There are so many great people that I've met in this city. People were quite welcoming when I first came here. Of course there are assholes, and hipster people that only care about fashion, but the number of sincerely good people overpowers that.

Zajackowski: You have a new 7" that just came out on Dingus Records. What exactly is a "dingus"?

Daniel: "Dingus" is kind of a term, like "fuck," that can describe eight million different things.

Andy: Like "fuck"? No it's not. It's more like "fuck-ass" than it is "fuck." A "fuck-ass" is more like a "dingus."

Daniel: Okay, "dingus" is always a noun, but it's one of those words like "fuck" that can be used in place of any other word.

Andy: "Fuck" can't go in place of any other word.

Daniel: But you can use fuck in eight million different situations, and you can also use "dingus" in eight million different situations. It can be used in two main ways: a noun in place of a word that's just something there—and I'm talking complete drunkenness, and I hope that comes across in the interview—it can also be used in contempt. If you're pissed at someone, it can be like, "They're such a fucking dingus," but at the same time you can always be like, "Where did

I put that dingus?"

Andy: It can be used in two main ways. When you can't think of a word, and you really wanted to say it, but you put it in its place, usually a noun.

Justin: Modern Machines are dingi.

Zajackowski: Why a 7" and not a CDEP, which would have cost less to put out?

Daniel: Because I don't even own a working CD player.

Justin: You have to start with a 7". My car got hit and I had enough money. We would have never put out a 7" ourselves, 'cause no one else would have been able to throw in on the money, I don't think, but my car got hit and I was like, "Hey that's enough money to put out a 7", so let's fuckin' do it."

Andy: Why would you put out a CDEP?

Kevin: It sounds better (7"). That's all I have to say. It sounds better.

Zajackowski: What is your stance on drugs?

Andy: Why would you stand on them? That's a bad idea. You need to eat them. When the dogs come, you need to eat them.

Daniel: One of the few times in my life that I smoked marijuana happened to be a half hour before the drug dog sniffed our van on this last tour. And I was really stoned and it freaked me out.

Justin: As long as you don't end up an asshole that goes and fucks people over 'cause you need some drugs, it's cool.

Daniel: See, there's this big conflict between drugs and thugs.

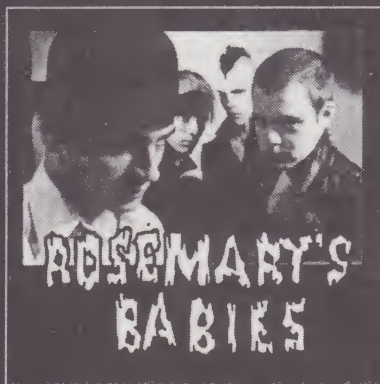
Zajackowski: I guess this one's for Justin and Kevin, since you are from Dubuque. Maybe you can shed some light on why predominantly white, rural counties along the Mississippi River in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota routinely vote for Democrats.

Kevin: I can shed light on it, because... if you poll the population, like, through the phones, you'll get

WHAT IS YOUR
STANCE ON
DRUGS?
ANDY: WHY
WOULD YOU STAND
ON THEM?



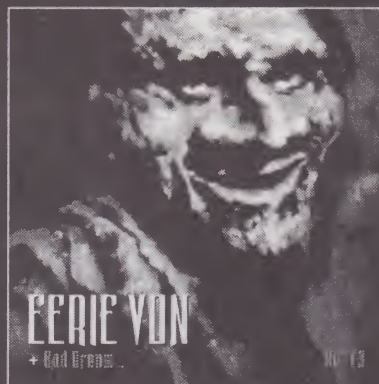
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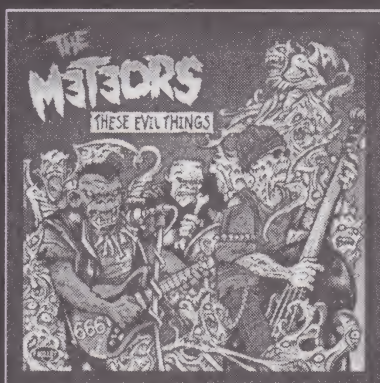


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


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the people that are sitting at home, that are like, "Yeah, I believe George Bush is, you know, he's great. He does all these great things. He liberates Iraq," and whatever. If you poll them, you'll get that. But through votes you'll find out that those counties turn Democratic. The people who will actually go out and do something about it are the Democrats: the people who would not vote for George Bush, simply on the fact that it's not George Bush. Whether it's John Kerry or whoever the fuck it is, they will go out and vote because it's not George Bush. That's why you get that.

Andy: Move to Iowa.

Zajackowski: Okay, favorite book about music.

Justin: Dan can answer that. I haven't read many books about music that I can think of at the moment.

Daniel: Man, it sounds fucking cliché, but *Please Kill Me* might be my favorite book about music. I've read that a million times, whereas I read the New York Dolls biography twice. I can't even finish that Rolling Stones book I got. You know what? *Fargo Rock City* is fucking amazing.

Justin: I think all I've read are, *Rotten*. That was okay, but it was probably all bullshit from what I could gather from it, just because I'm guessing everything Johnny Rotten says is probably bullshit. But that was a good book. Half-pint gave me his copy of Shane MacGowan's book. I couldn't read more than five pages, because every sentence ended with

an adverb. It'd be like, "He took a drag from his cigarette, thoughtfully." Every single sentence he would say something and then it would say, "He did this, something-fully, or something-ly." That could have been a good book, but I don't fuckin' know, 'cause I wouldn't read it after ten pages.

Andy: Anything that Lester Bangs has written. Those couple of books that have been compiled, just his rants or whatnot. Sometimes I'll go to the microfilm at UWM and read old *Creem* magazines 'cause they still haven't put out anything comprehensive by Bangs. Richard Meltzer is all right but some of his shit bores me to death.

Daniel: Was this question "best" book about music, or "favorite" book about music?

Zajackowski: Favorite.

Daniel: Because my favorite would have to be *Lords of Chaos*.

Andy: I'm not finished, you dingus.

Daniel: My two favorite styles of books are true crime books and books about music. *Lords of Chaos* happens to cover both, better than even a book about Phil Spector could, who is guilty. But *Lords of Chaos* is an amazing book because it covers murder, it covers arson, it covers crazy right-wing nazi skinheads, and it's still a book about music that I kinda like.

Andy: That *Our Band Could Be Your Life* book is pretty fucking amazing. I mean, I really don't like any of the books that come from the perspective that "punk was so much cooler back in the day, man." I hate to say that *American*

Hardcore is like that, but I really like it because he attempts to be comprehensive; it's a great archive and whatnot, but I don't know if I agree with the perspective.

Daniel: I think that *American Hardcore* was written with a really elitist attitude.

Zajackowski: How 'bout, favorite Lookout Records release?

Kevin: That would definitely have to be that EP of *1,000 Hours*.

Andy: That's exactly what I was going to say! Holy fuck!

Kevin: I mean, if you wanna say that EP, or if you wanna say *1,039/Smoothed Out Slappy Hours*.

Daniel: It's a toss up between *1,000 Hours* and *The Shit Split*. I'm probably going to go for *The Shit Split*.

Justin: I don't know. Anything by Crimpshrine.

Andy: Which one?

Justin: I think *Duct Tape Soup* was very, very...

Andy: *Duct Tape Soup* was the album, but most of it was originally released on Musical Tragedies as *Lame Gig Contest*.

Zajackowski: I said Lookout Records release. I think that's fair. You can do that. How about a generic question, but important...

Andy: Generic potato chips.

Justin: Generic barbecue chips are all right. Except for the generic barbecue chips we got in whatever city that was on tour. I got them in San Pedro at the dollar store, but those generic barbecue chips were shit.

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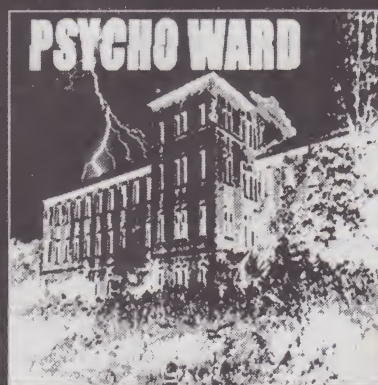
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Split Seven

THAT WAS RIGHT
AFTER MY INCREDIBLE
HULK INFATUATION IN
WHICH I THOUGHT I
WAS THE INCREDIBLE
HULK, AND WHENEVER
MY PARENTS WOULD
PISS ME OFF,
I WOULD RIP
OFF MY SHIRT,
AND "HULK OUT."

Daniel: Those are better than the Aldi barbecue chips...

Zajackowski: Did you guys know Aldi has alcohol now?

Daniel: Aldi also has veggie burgers.

Andy: They had Pabst Light at the 99 cent store in San Pedro.

Justin: I think Aldi barbecue chips are good.

Daniel: The 99 cent store in Pedro has the best Ramen in the world. I know it's ridiculous to talk about who has better Ramen, cause Ramen is something you only eat when you're really poor, usually on tour...

Andy: You didn't eat any of it!

Daniel: I'm eating it now. I only have three packs left. The Spicy Vegetable Ramen at the 99 cent store in San Pedro is tits.

Andy: But that wasn't generic. We're talking about generic here.

Daniel: How am I going to shotgun this beer?

Zajackowski: In general, what are your songs about?

Daniel: That'd be that guy. I have no idea what the songs are about. I don't know a single one of our lyrics. I just learned our song titles on this last tour.

Justin: Okay, uh...the majority...

Daniel: Are nonsense.

Justin: I think somebody asked me how many were about girls, and actually out of the ten songs only three of them have anything to do with girls. The rest of them are about me feeling like I'm going insane. There are lots of different things that the songs are about. There are a few about girls, a few about feeling like I'm going crazy, and then a few about...

Kevin: I think one of the song titles is "I'm Going Crazy".

Daniel: That's called "I'm Doing Fine," which is the opposite of "I'm Going Crazy." That's also my least favorite song we play, and I hate playing it.

Kevin: We didn't even play it!

Andy: This song is about why we don't have a lyric sheet.

Daniel: It's on the fucking 7"!



Justin: There's one about somebody I know being born again and my problems with that.

Zajackowski: Do you think what passes for punk rock on the radio today is more or less effective to turning people on to more good music? Like, how you guys used to listen to Nirvana and Green Day and stuff.

Justin: A lot less effective. The bands that got me into punk, like Nirvana or Green Day, they were bands that actually did start out on smaller labels, and when they got big, they would bring bands with them. Nirvana brought Jawbreaker out with them. Green Day brought Pansy Division, who aren't very good, but they brought the Riverdales, too. Green Day got people to buy other things off Lookout, because they had older records on Lookout. Or people would see Mike Dirnt wearing a Screaming Weasel shirt, and they would think, "Oh, if he likes Screaming Weasel, then maybe they're good," and that probably got lots of people into Screaming Weasel.

Daniel: But Kelly Osbourne wears Adicts shirts.

Andy: But then we see the chart. Then we see how it drops off.

Daniel: I don't want any confusion here. I didn't get into punk via Green Day and Nirvana.

Zajackowski: You're too old.

Andy: Neither did I. Minor Threat was my first punk record.

Daniel: I got into punk via metal. The first punk record I ever owned was the first Suicidal Tendencies album. I bought that thinking it was like the shitty other older metal records. I got into hardcore via Anthrax, who had S.O.D., which was a hardcore band. To answer your question: I think it's less effective now, because bands like Green Day and Nirvana were punk. Bands like Nirvana and Green Day definitely

did a lot to promote the scene, and the shitty bands now are just fucking Clear Channel shit. They're bands that grew up listening to Nirvana and Green Day, but never progressed past the mainstream stage.

Justin: Those bands promoted the smaller bands. The bands who are "punk" now, and I'm putting quotes around the word punk, were influenced by Blink 182, and bands like that. Blink 182 say they were influenced by Screaming Weasel or something, but those new bands, they'll say, "We were influenced by Blink 182 and... Creed."

Daniel: Some people say that Blink 182's first album was good, but I don't respect that opinion. I don't think Blink 182 was ever fucking good. I hated that band when they came out, and I hate them now. I'm the grumpy old guy in the band.

Zajackowski: Daniel, You call yourself the "King of Rock'n'Roll". How did this dawn upon you that you were the "King of Rock'n'Roll"? What was the process here?

Daniel: There are so many things that went into this. It's ridiculous. When I was a little kid, I was so infatuated with Elvis. Elvis, the Stones, and the Beatles were the first music I ever heard. I was totally into Elvis, and I used to pomp my hair up when I was in second grade. I'd go to school and tell my friends to call me "Elvis." That was right after my Incredible Hulk infatuation in which I thought I was the Incredible Hulk, and whenever my parents would piss me off, I would rip off my shirt, and "hulk out."

Andy: Whoa! It went back that far!

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FUCKED UP

Think back for a minute. Try to remember the first time you ever heard a punk band topple everything you knew about music. Not the first time you heard something called punk rock or the first time you spiked your hair or threw a couple of elbows in the pit, but the first time that light bulb lit up over your head and you knew there was no turning back. The first time you heard Born Against or Void and you just felt it in your gut, that from that moment on, you wouldn't be able to look at life in the same way. Remember? Fucked Up brings that feeling back ten-fold. Even after hearing hundreds and thousands of bands plow the same strip of musical ground, Fucked Up still pulls something out that sends chills up my spine. No hyperbole: if you're looking for something in music beyond "nice guitar riff" or "looks pretty cool," something visceral and real and thought-provoking, there's no way you can go wrong with them.

Damian: vocals • Mike: guitar • Josh: guitar • Sandy: bass • Jonah: drums

Interview by Todd and Josh • Photos by Todd and Donofthedead

Todd: Mike, your pseudonym is 10,000 Marbles, is that correct?

Mike: Yeah, that's one of them.

Todd: What's that a reference to?

Mike: I can't really remember, but I'm pretty sure it's not a reference.

Todd: It's not a reference to *Animal House*? "Can I have ten thousand marbles, please?"

Mike: Really? Actually, that probably is it. The real answer is yes. No, it's like, if you read these certain parts in the Bible, Jesus talks about the spilling of the ten thousand marbles...

Damian: It's actually from Chaucer, from *The Canterbury Tales*.

Todd: What was the one time that this band actually came to physical blows?

Damian: Ten minutes ago.

Jonah: Like nine times on this tour already.

Damian: I've beat up Mike like six times. I punch him in the chest. Actually, the first time, I wasn't even in the band. It was like the second time that Fucked Up had played and Josh was the singer then before he moved to guitar, and there was no one watching them because they were terrible. I was standing up front, kind of paying my respects, and Josh kicks me as hard as he can, right in the fucking balls, so then I picked him up and I smashed him into the ground as hard as I could. It wasn't even like people were laughing. It was serious, and then Josh got up and was really hurt. Josh had all his activist-type friends there who didn't like me to begin with, and that sealed the deal.

Todd: What do you guys do? What are your jobs?

Mike: I'm a produce clerk at a food co-op and I work an internship at City Hall doing a database of green roofs.

Todd: Green what?

Mike: It's like when you put plants on your roof to remedy the climate. That's called a green roof.

Jonah: I'm in between jobs currently.

Mike: Jonah, where do you live?

Jonah: I live in this run-down warehouse in the bad part of Toronto by myself...

Mike: With his dad.

Jonah: I take care of my dad. He's a divorcee. He's real depressed, so I cheer him up. We watch movies together and I put my arm around him, make him feel like life is all right. Otherwise, I take twenty classes at the University of Toronto. I had a test the day before we left for tour, and instead of taking it, I just dropped the course.

Damian: I had a paper due the day before we left and I just dropped the course. I'm in school and I'm going to be in school forever because I take one class a year. I manage a video store, and I guess it's kind of an underground video store. We sell a lot of weird movies. And I write a TV show for a network in Toronto.

Jonah: Yeah, that's certainly a real job, isn't it?

Mike: What's it about, Damian?

Damian: It's about a single mom that fights zombies in a quarantined town. It's for the comedy network in Canada, which is the equivalent of Comedy Central here, I guess.

Todd: Did the band name really get you kicked out of your house?

Jonah: Close to it. Again, talking about my father, hopefully he'll never read this, but we played a live set on a radio show in Toronto called "Equalizing Distort." This is before he even knew I was in a band; he thought I was just jamming with my buddies on some other instrument.

Damian: Every time he would go to jam,

he would say, "Dad, I'm going to the library!"

Jonah: Yeah, I was going to the library to study. And my parents were musicians, so go figure they didn't want me being in a band. Anyway, they heard it and my dad was horrified. "Son, I can't believe you're in a band called... it makes me sick to my stomach! Why do you play such rage music? It makes me think of bikers and murderers and prostitutes." Definitely, it was a source of conflict for the first couple of years...

Damian: Not for any of us.

Jonah: When we went on tour, in order to convince him, I just told him that we changed the name to something else, and my parents still believe that to this day.

Todd: What do they think it is?

Jonah: They think it's Jacob's Ladder.

Todd: After the Huey Lewis song?

Jonah: Absolutely. Needless to say, it's allowed me plenty of tours and not to be kicked out of my house and witness my father crying more than he already does.

Damian: Sad and true at the same time.

Mike: You would probably just get sent to your room.

Todd: Since you talked about rage music...

Jonah: We do play rage music, for the uninitiated.

Todd: How do you think Fucked Up looks at anger in different and unique ways?

Mike: Our music isn't really angry. I don't think. Our lyrics aren't.

Damian: There were a couple of songs that are, but certainly, for the most part now... I don't even know what they'd be described as.

Mike: Anything that anybody could be angry about, there are already ten million songs about it.

Damian: We still have songs that are kinda clichéd things, like being frustrated that you can't talk to a person who you want to talk to because you have a crush on them.

Mike: That wasn't really angry.

Damian: That's kind of angry, "What Could Have Been."

Jonah: It's more like a latent anger.

Mike: We approach anger by getting angry at each other a lot.

Jonah: The band is really an outlet for us to get angry at each other more than anybody else.

Mike: I guess we approach anger differently because we're a band that hates each other.

Josh: So how do five very different people gravitate towards being in a band together and agreeing on the stuff that you guys agree on?

Damian: It's not really a democracy, this band.

Mike: Like, for example, today when we all sat down and said, "Today we're all going to agree to go to this record store and spend four hours driving there in the rain." Since we all talked about it and came to this consensus about how we were going to do this today, nobody really got angry about it.

Damian: Mike's just upset because he's given up on music and now just reads books about yeomen. I guess this is just the most unlikely band to ever stay together. It's basically five people from completely different standpoints on life who shouldn't be in a band together, but we just have been. We're called Fucked Up, for Christ's sake. We don't really get along but for some reason, we just can't leave each other. I love you, Mike.

Mike: It's like being in a family.

Damian: The Manson family.

Mike: It's like we're all seventeen-year-olds but we're all parents as well. We hate each other like a seventeen-year-old hates their parents.

Damian: I love everyone in the band, but I'll punch them and yell at them the whole day.

Mike: Kind of like our parents did.

Damian: My dad used to pull my tail to get me to talk, like in *Babe 2: Pigs in the City*.

Mike: Damian works at a really underground video store, that's probably why you guys didn't catch that.

Josh: Where do you think people's expectations come from, where they get bummed out when you play seventeen-minute songs and put out two-song singles?

Mike: Well, I think that's people's expectations at this point. People were sort of bummed out when the first record came out and we caught a lot of slack from that, like distros wouldn't carry it. Now it's sort of lockstep; we're on single eight or nine now, and I think people sort of expect short, catchy songs that have a solo at the

end. I don't think people have been super-bummed about the 12" as much as I thought.

Damian: We were expecting a huge, huge backlash for that 12".

Jonah: With the 12", I think people are expecting more gimmicks. Whenever I see the band listed on somebody's radio show, I'll try to listen to it online or something, and they're always saying stuff like, "What will these Canadians think of next? Crazy Fucked Up with their nutty records!"

Josh: "Zany!"

Jonah: I guess people are expecting us to be gimmicky, like magicians or something.

Todd: What other hardcore and punk rock

bands have put out a parallel groove record before?

Damian: The only bands that I know of that have done it are John Cooper Clarke, who was a British punk poet, sort of...

Jonah: I thought that was Clark Kent or whatever.

Mike: I think there was a comp 7" that came out.

Damian: Also, Artless, which was Mykel Board's band, I think they might have done it.

Mike: Who was that band that had the giant hole drilled into it?

Damian: Oh, that was Tumor Circus on Alternative Tentacles. We actually took the





idea from A Tribe Called Quest, who did this three-sided single thing, and we were like, "Oh, that sounds awesome." Mike and I were saying, "Yeah, we should definitely do this for a record." We didn't realize it was going to cost so much until we committed to it and then we were like, "Oh, fuck."

Mike: Whatever.

Damian: Yeah. It's also actually kind of funny how it turned out, because what happens is that if you play it too much, the needle begins to wear down the grooves dividing the two songs and it plays both songs simultaneously.

Mike: Which probably isn't a big problem because nobody listens to it more than once.

the ideal thing. Actually, I'd prefer to be any band but Fucked Up.

Todd: Not in the typical ways, but where do you think the frustration and the desperation comes to the band for you personally? Not like, "Police are bad," or, "City council, that's a pickle," but what are the personal things that you're really frustrated about, things that you haven't been able to come to terms with, even today?

Damian: I think for me, it's that the world could be perfect if everyone just kind of got together and thought about it.

Mike: Like every person?

Damian: Yeah, I find it really frustrating that I can't organize this.

Jonah: Hands Across the Planet. You'd be on the phone all day.

by a bus tomorrow, my mom would sell these for a quarter. What am I doing? This is my life, acquiring these possessions." I trick myself into thinking that I'm so non-consumer, but I'm the worst consumer ever.

Jonah: I've definitely got deferral anxiety. I don't think about any of the shit that these two idiots do.

Mike: Jonah's like, "I've got a curfew."

Damian: He's frustrated that people don't smile enough.

Jonah: Yeah, right.

Mike: His dad won't buy him a new skateboard.

Jonah: This is what gets me frustrated. I don't usually think about any of this stuff. I usually ride pretty high, and then not thinking about it, it all piles up and comes to a

I guess this is just the most unlikely band to ever stay together.

Damian: Yeah, "I'm just going to MP3 this right away and cut out the boring parts."

Mike: It would be a good song if it was a three-minute song on a single.

Damian: Like everything else with Fucked Up, we have to drag it out to the point where it's brutal and annoying.

Josh: You mentioned in one interview that you wanted the band to be thought of kind of like the Melvins, where they're not really popular but people still listen to them years later. Do you think that records like *Looking for Gold* are kind of paralleling the Melvins, where you're doing the opposite of what people want?

Damian: Yeah, I would definitely love to be the Melvins, where you're at a level of success that's sustainable. The Melvins are allowed to do stuff that would normally be considered gimmicky but people still take them seriously. That would be

Damian: I'm frustrated about the fact that no matter what, I'm never really happy. I'm frustrated that I work at a job that's great but I'm not satisfied with it. I'm still like, "Fuck, I need to get a real career going." Even though I think that's total bullshit, I'm still trapped in that sort of mindset, and that frustrates me.

Mike: Yeah, same sort of thing. You get so close to things that maybe you can enjoy, but you still can't, and that's sort of the problem that I've always had.

Damian: "If I get this one more thing, that'll make me happy. If I can get this car or this apartment, that'll make me happy." When you get to that point, it's just fucking empty. I really wish I was religious because I think my life would be a hell of a lot easier. "Oh, at least it's going to the promised land." I collect records and sometimes I'll look at my records and think, "If I got hit

head eventually. I've got my own set of irritating things that cause pressure in my life.

Damian: Like burping a lot.

Mike: Always being happy.

Jonah: Family problems. But you know, just be happy for now and let the depression kick in ten years down the line.

Damian: I think that happened to me. When I was younger, I was always sad but then one day, I was like, "Okay, I'm not going to be sad anymore." So I bottled it up and then I found punk and it was like it filled all the voids in my life. Three years ago, I was dating a girl and someone close to her got murdered. All my depression came out at once, I was like, "This is so fucking futile." I've been on medication trying to cope with it and I've been going to therapy. Why can't I be happy? Why am I letting this bog me down?

Jonah: I come from different types of anxieties. Nothing completely terrible or cataclysmic has happened in my life. I come from a different kind of family, a long line of immigrants and farmers that have different expectations of me. You go one way and you don't know what they're going to think about it or if they think about it at all. You just try to be who you are, right?

Damian: Jonah's going to explode one day.

Jonah: I definitely am. I don't ever talk about it or try and think about it, so trying to explain it to the staff of *Razorcake* isn't coming to me very easily. I didn't start a band about it.

Todd: What beef does Fucked Up have with mods? And define a mod.

Jonah: The guitar player of our band.

Damian: I don't know if it really exists in

have to be like, "Oh, this doesn't really sound like our band. This doesn't really sound like Poison Idea, so I'd better not use this." We just have a really open platform. We can do whatever we want. Our records don't have to be black or have skeletons on them and shit, our records don't have to have more than two songs, or one song sometimes. That's what it is. We are in this band and we can do whatever we want.

Damian: Once again, it's kind of about expectations. On the first 7", we had a really overt political song and now we kind of regret it, not that the sentiment has changed, but the way we approach it has definitely changed. And now we get labeled an anarchist band and that's not really what it's about. Also, hardcore's so susceptible to gimmicks.

Jonah: Like our band.

something that got the radio station knocked off the air?

Damian: That was a co-host of mine who called a promoter in town a junkie. The guy is a junkie, but unfortunately, the radio station wouldn't back us up in court. We were asked to apologize, but as a radio show, we decided not to apologize and they sent us packing. But that was at the time when the internet really started taking off, so I got a job at an internet radio station that actually started paying me. The internet went belly up and here I am.

Todd: Mike, since you just drew your logo on your windshield, what was the inspiration behind it? When I first saw it, I thought it was Articles of Faith or the Ex.

Mike: I was making demo covers and I just drew it freehand. We needed a logo that had an F in it and I did it in five seconds.

It's not that I don't want people to know about this stuff, but I don't like it when people are into it for the wrong reasons.

America because I haven't really seen it. For a while, they were indie rockers, and then the indie rockers were like, "I want to grow my hair long," and at that point there was a club in Toronto that started doing a weekly "Mod Club" night. It just seemed to epitomize everything I hated, like the people that I hated in high school were now swimming closer to my subculture.

Josh: "Hey, I'm into punk now!"

Damian: Exactly. It drove me mental to see these kids getting into shit that they shouldn't be into because it was just going to drag us all down. I think that was the main beef, and then it became more of a humorous thing for us to do.

Jonah: It was just a bunch of losers. If you're a mod in Toronto, you're a fucking idiot.

Damian: Here, it's totally different; you don't really see it. But in Canada, we don't have Hot Topic, so I guess it would be like a Hot Topic down here, or white belts. They just took everything that was kind of cool about these subcultures, like all the danger, out of it and just made it about fashion.

Jonah: It was just a bunch of postcards instead of punks.

Damian: They would play "Tears of a Clown" at the mod club and people would be like, "Soul music's amazing! Chubby Checker is the most soulful singer of all time!" And it's like, are you serious? Is that as deep as you're going to get into this?

Mike: To sum up, it was a fake beef, like everything else we do.

Todd: Mike, you once said that you don't want Fucked Up to be considered an "anything" band, not an anarchist band or a political band. What's the power and what's the purpose behind that? I think it's a really important thing.

Mike: It could be as simplistic as I make up a riff that you like on your guitar, I don't

Damian: I mean like larger gimmicks and trends. Not like our band; we're totally unique and dangerous. It would just suck to wake up one day and say, "I'm so bored of wearing this bandana and carrying around this old school skateboard."

Mike: With the first 7", if you look at the cover and read the lyrics, you know exactly what the song is about, but with the later records, you can't really prescribe anything to them. If you want to know what the record is about, you have to pay attention, you have to learn more. We want people to have a closer eye on things.

Todd: Damian, were you the one who said

Todd: How did Sandy get the nickname Slumpy?

Mike: She made it up. She's made up Slumpy, Laundry, and now Mustard, for no reason.

Todd: And she was Uncle Remus, too?

Damian: Yeah. We were trying to come up with nicknames for ourselves one day and we came up with some for Sandy that weren't that bad, and she was like, "What about Laundry?" We were like, "Why?" And she said, "Because I leave my laundry around the house."

Todd: What does Sandy do?



Damian: She's actually got the best job out of all of us.

Mike: She smokes weed.

Jonah: She's a photojournalist on tour.

Mike: She's making a TV show, too.

Damian: It's for public access channel, so she doesn't get paid. She's also a program scheduler for a huge company, and she probably makes as much money as the rest of the band put together, not counting Jonah's allowance.

Jonah: If I saved my allowance, I'd proba-

Jonah: As far as obscurity in my own life, I try not to be like anybody else.

Mike: Maybe when I was younger, but I don't try to seek out obscurity anymore. I want to have a garden, I want to go to school and work and learn about plants, know where to get micronutrients from.

Jonah: That's pretty obscure for most people, though. You learn about whatever you want to learn about and it just happens to be different. You wear pants no

"Son, Why do you play such rage music? It makes me think of bikers and murderers and prostitutes."

bly be pretty rich.

Todd: Are all of you guys record collectors?

Mike: I used to be.

Damian: Mike stopped recently. Jonah is. I am.

Mike: The other two aren't.

Damian: Sandy isn't really, and Josh is a former record collector.

Todd: Being a record collector, do you think you kind of seek obscurity out in yourself?

Mike: In terms of how our records are produced?

Todd: Two things: either you personally, or collectively as Fucked Up.

matter who you are.

Todd: And you realize that nearly anything has a community or a culture.

Damian: I like things elite. You know that song by NOFX, "My Job Is to Keep Punk Rock Elite"? I think that might be one of the most important songs to come out of a big name punk band in years. It's not that I don't want people to know about this stuff, but I don't like it when people are into it for the wrong reasons. I like it when I meet a kid who's so passionate about this that you can tell he would have been hopeless without finding this. But then you have... what was her name?

Jonah: Janet Jackson on TV wearing an Avengers patch and a Germs patch.

Damian: Ashley Simpson talking about how she's punk. That just makes me want to search deeper and darker. Now when people ask me what kind of music I listen to, I don't say punk or hardcore, I say powerviolence or sludge or hate edge. Anything that kind of alienates people.

Mike: We're sort of getting to the point, annoyingly, where punk culture is like this ocean and we're swimming down farther and farther. There's all these seagulls eating whatever comes to the top and shitting on it, and we just want to get away from that. But there's a point where you hit the magma and you're like, "Fuck, where are we now?"

Damian: It's weird though, because also at the same time, we've kind of stuck with this thing where as a band, we're really happy when we get bigger and bigger. Our T-shirt was featured in this big mainstream rock band's video. A friend of ours was in the video wearing it, and we're kind of like, "Wow, we're getting more popular," but then you think, "Fuck, I don't want to be popular."

Mike: If we wanted to be an obscure band, we wouldn't have gotten onto an airplane and gone on tour.

Jonah: We wouldn't have pressed more than three hundred of each record.

Damian: We're not really into obscurity with the band. We like it when kids come to our shows. Last night, for the first time in a long time, there was no one singing along.

Jonah: There was no one there, either. There's a muted glory in being obscure or underappreciated, but after a while, it's like, "No one likes us or cares about us."

Damian: There are two Toronto weekly newspapers that are kind of music and alternative culture-related and they're kinda mainstream. We always thought we'd never get reviewed in there, like they're never going to care, but then this year, we made their top ten shows of the year.

Todd: What's the context of the picture in *Baiting the Public* with the two people having sex in the opera house?

Jonah: That was my parents' wedding.

Damian: If you look closely, you can see Jonah's head peeking out of the vagina.

Mike: Have you heard of the Actionists from Vienna? That's an Actionist happening. Part of that record was supposed to be explicitly really annoying. We split the song up, the lyrics are all jumbled, so that was supposed to be the symbolic representation of what the song was supposed to be about. That was their art show, this naked dude whipping around a naked woman for some reason.

Damian: There was a point when art could shock, where people would riot at the screenings of movies. There's people that are doing it again, like when they



screened *Baise-moi* in Quebec, some guy lost his mind and ran up into the booth and tore the celluloid, because he didn't want people to see such filth.

Mike: The director got murdered in Holland.

Damian: Yeah, so people are reacting again to stuff, but that's kind of what *Baiting the Public* was about.

Josh: Why do you think that people need to know about the Actionists and the Spanish Civil War and stuff like that?

Mike: Because it's cool. I don't have an agenda. It worked out as simply as I was reading a bunch of books about the Spanish Civil War and I had just made a record, so I needed something to be on the cover and I needed the lyrics to be about something. I don't really care what people are into.

Damian: With the Vienna Actionists, I think that's just about people breaking out of the shells we're in.

Mike: But who cares? Going back to the obscure thing, I don't want people to know what I know about, unless it's something that I think is really, really important.

Damian: I want to see people riot in the streets, as long as I don't lose my stuff. I want to see people really scared of punk again.

Jonah: I went to high school with this Jewish kid and he told his parents that there were a lot of punks there, so they took him out of the school because they thought punks were all Nazis. That's the wrong kind of fear, I suppose, but some people associate fear with punk music.

Damian: I want to be a band that threatens people's lifestyles; kind of like the Vienna Actionists, where people would be shocked to go to these performances because they would be wild and out there.

Josh: So people in Toronto aren't really receptive of the band, or they weren't in the beginning?

Jonah: They weren't for a while, but now everybody's getting into us. I think the popularity comes from the outside, like Toronto waited for us to be approved everywhere else and then it was like, "Oh, they're from here. We love them."

Damian: It's kind of weird in Toronto. For the past two years, we've played this indie rock night, which is all the big Toronto bands like the Hidden Cameras and the Constantines, all these bands that go on to be on Rough Trade. The first time, we brought our own people in, so it was kind of fun, but this year when we played there, it was packed to the rafters with kids and people were going nuts. So we're finally getting recognition in our hometown. Until we went on tour for the first time, we didn't know people liked us outside of Toronto. We had read reviews that were good, but we didn't know people cared.

Jonah: In Chicago, we were supposed to play a classroom at somebody's school, but it was front to back filled with people. It was totally overwhelming.

Damian: It's like, wow, people are listening. We'd better stop putting Nazi stuff on our records.

Josh: Do you think that's good, like it lets the music kind of stew in its own juices for a while?

Damian: Yeah, I'm really glad no one bought our first demo. It definitely would have been a terrible thing. And it's good because we get to work on songs for a long time. We saw my friend's band early in the summer and then they signed to a major label and wrote a record for that label, and we saw them two weeks ago and they had all new songs. And we were like, "Geez, in three years, we've only written three songs."

Josh: But your songs are seventeen minutes long.

Damian: That's true, so I guess time-wise, we've covered as much as they have.

Todd: Have you guys ever heard of the Deacons for Defense?

All: No.

Todd: The Deacons for Defense are actually kind of interesting. They were a militant wing of the Civil Rights Movement down in Louisiana. It expanded into fifty or sixty sects, and a lot of them were World War II veterans who said, "I just came back from fighting in this fucking war and now I don't have any rights, so I'm going to help organize these communi-

ties in tactically smart ways. I'm not going to incite violence, but if they push us, we're going to push back." It was actually very effective in the deep south. It just seems to have slipped under the radar. It's also interesting how in activist circles, people are very cautious about using violence against violence. You have some guy with a truncheon who's going to hit you in the head, the best thing to do is curl up into a ball?

Damian: It's so hard, especially in an activist mindset, because it's not a fair fight. No matter what you do, they're going to track you down and there's no real safe way to fight back. That rapper The Game, his label's called Black Wall Street and on his DVD, the guy explains what Black Wall Street was. It was this thing where black communities decided that they weren't being taken care of and they had no real rights outside, so what they did was they internalized their communities. One dollar would be passed around six or seven times before it would leave the community. If you can subvert what's going on in the outside world and set up your own thing, then maybe you'll win that way, build something that's better in the long run and maybe you won't have to use violence.





SST dipped into the beat generation's reservoir and created something unique. Punk didn't come out of a vacuum, and SST's purist commitment to putting out vinyl for art's sake was reminiscent of the alternative press movement of the '60s. The label was a safe haven for bands as diverse as The Minutemen, Hüsker Dü, Saccharine Trust and label owner Greg Ginn's group, Black Flag. They were bound together by a common ethos and aesthetic: to create vibrant, pertinent music with a disregard for public opinion and pressure. SST wasn't a label; it was a lifestyle. These were blue collar guys and gals who willing sacrificed any hope of monetary or crossover success. They toured in a van, starved, fought, and were savagely beaten numerous times for being punk-before it was sold in stores. As the bass player of Black Flag (after founding member Chuck Dukowski's departure), Kira Roessler was committed to SST's lifestyle long before she gained her bars. Her philosophy, formidable bass playing, and commitment to education have provided infinite inspiration to me.

Kira maintains her strong work ethic today as a sound editor (often working sixty hours a week) and maintains her commitment to bass through Dos. After hanging with her for a couple of hours I've come to realize Kira's still very much the same. The only difference: no more black coffee. Kira takes the healthier tea alternative now.

Interview by **Ryan Leach**

Photos by **Richard Hogge**

Original Artwork by **Amy Adoyzie**

Ryan: What are some of your earliest memories of music?

Kira: I think what happened was my parents got a piano in the house. I decided I wanted to play, so they said, "If you practice a half-hour-a-day, we'll get you lessons." My brother Paul was nine and I was six. So we started doing classical piano lessons. I played piano for five years. I was very competitive with my brother; trying to keep up, because I was younger. I quit because I got sick, and I fell behind and I couldn't keep up and I was losing the competition. I couldn't handle it. My teacher was really upset, 'cause he thought I had talent. But the interesting thing I think about piano was that I'm left handed and the left hand is the bass line. Somehow, it all tied together—it led me there even though it wasn't an intellectual choice. I always have a soft spot for hearing that piano music, or classical piano or piano with singing, 'cause my brother writes songs on the piano.

Ryan: That was when you were in New Haven?

Kira: Yes, I lived in New Haven, but only till I was eight. Then I moved to the Caribbean and I lived there for three years. Then I lived outside of San Francisco in a suburb called Moraga for two years, and then I was in LA most of the rest of the time. I've tried a couple times to give young people bass guitar lessons. It's funny. I offer free lessons to people and they never come back.

Ryan: Really?

Kira: I can't understand it! I don't know what I'm doing wrong.

Ryan: That work ethic you had coming up, where do you think you got that—that innate drive? Very few people could practice in their room for six to ten hours a day.

Kira: You know, I hate to say it, but I have done a lot of soul searching all these years, and I think a lot of it was competitiveness. I wanted to keep up with my brother who had this project band that was very complicated music he was trying to play, and I somehow had to hit the ground running. But that being said I think there is more to it. The reason that I got my tattoo, which is the logo of Black Flag, is, to me, it means that whatever you do, do it all the way. I feel that was a concept I could live with. I don't start something without completing it. I don't do any work—any sort of activity—without giving it my all. It seems unreasonable to do anything and not putting all of my effort into it. I can't understand kind of dabbling in something. It is not in my nature. I don't know where it comes from but it's true about everything: my work and

my exercise, my friendships, my relationships. I just have a tendency to do it all the way and cut my losses if I can't. I don't seem to be the norm in that way. I think that the break I took from when I was eleven till I was fifteen, where I stopped piano and started bass, I think the truth of that was that I missed music in my life and I didn't know it. I think that there had been a void. 'Cause the bottom line is if I don't play my bass for a couple weeks I won't consciously know what's wrong, but something is wrong. It is just like that. There was this emptiness for awhile. By the way, a real miserable time in a girl's life is eleven to fifteen. It became a friend and an outlet that it provides. One can only hope people find something like that in their lives that offers them that release and safe haven.

Ryan: Yeah. So talking about your brother's prog rock band, Arc Squared...

Kira: The piece was called *The Arc* and the band was called The Arc Squared.

Ryan: When his band broke up, did he get wind of the punk movement? Is that what ended that, or did it just run into the ground?

Kira: Paul had always had bands. He had Top 40 bands. He had been writing his own songs from a very early age. We always had a converted garage at our parent's house where he practiced in and Dad and Mom couldn't get mad about it. He was very constant. In terms of the work ethic, Paul very much has it for music, too, almost to an obsessive degree. Fifteen was also a big turning point because my Mom moved away. My brother and I ended up living on our own in a house in the Valley where we converted the garage to be a practice place. Originally, that was for Arc Squared. Then we started getting exposed to punk rock and going to punk rock shows. It was very similar timing as that dissolved and our first punk rock band, which we immediately developed, where Paul played drums, because we didn't know if keyboards were allowed in punk rock.

So Paul played drums and a good friend of his, Mike Brown, that he had been in a band with from up north came down and became the guitar player. A friend from high school, William, was the singer. Waxx, my first band. My first gig ever was at The Whiskey A Go-Go. I was sixteen.

Ryan: That's not too long to have been playing. That's pretty brave.

Kira: [laughs] I sucked, I can assure you. We sucked. I can play you tapes. I can prove that.

Ryan: But then Paul went on to do The Screamers?

Kira: My memory of it is was, one of the things that I did in the punk rock scene was I tried to make friends with bands. I caught on that networking was important. The way I remember it, I got to know the guys in The Screamers. The drummer in The Screamers told me they wanted to get rid of their keyboard player and I told him that my brother had played piano for a long time. So, yeah, it was one of those magical things. Like I said, we were afraid that keyboards just weren't going to be possible and then the only keyboard band in punk rock needed a keyboardist, and Paul was the obvious choice. He kept doing Waxx. He kept playing drums. He played in The Controllers for awhile. He didn't purely stop. But that was just a great fit for him, because The Screamers, for the punk rock scene, were one of the big bands. I liked them. I used to roadie for them. That was part of my way of networking. I would show up early and move people's equipment and help them with their stuff, so I could get into gigs for free, but also to get to know the bands and stuff. So I roadied for them and The Germs and The

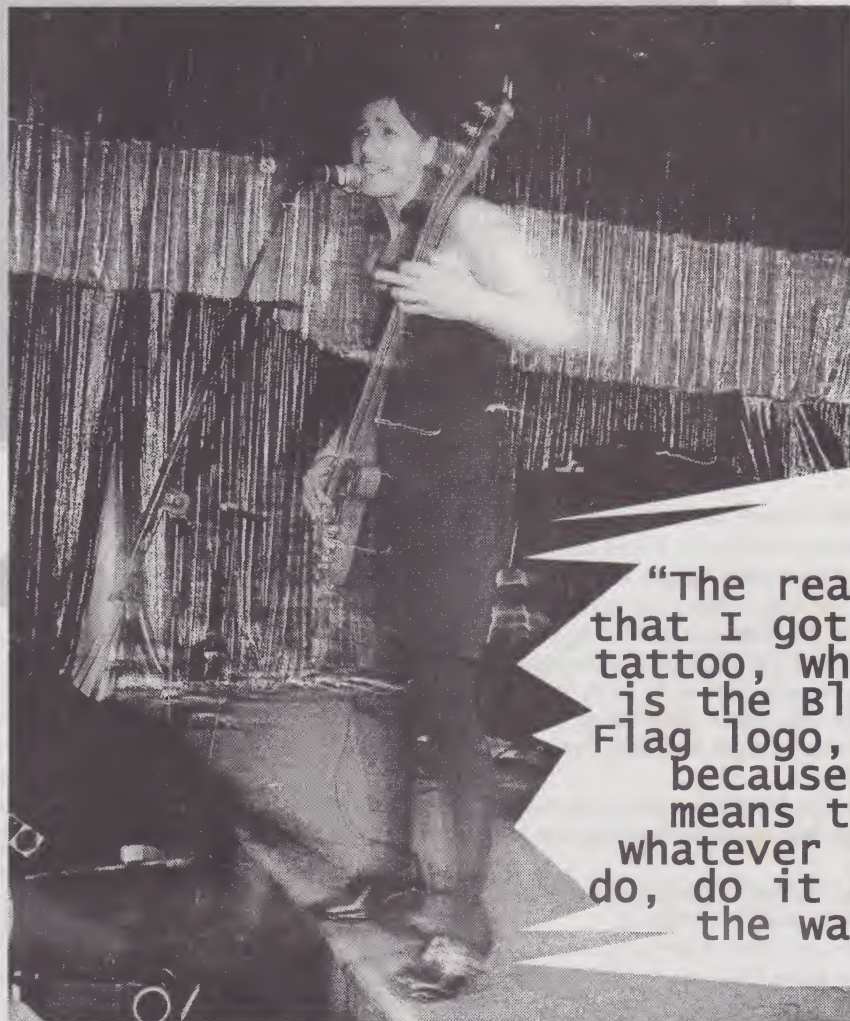
Avengers when they came to town from San Francisco. I loved The Avengers! They were good! But that was part of it. I was broke, so I tried to operate with about all I could do. I knew the basics of how to hook up equipment and stuff. I was pretty strong for a little thing.

Ryan: So you were in a couple of bands that never properly recorded until Twisted Roots?

Kira: Yeah, Waxx. I had my own all girl band called Sexsick and I had the Visitors and The Monsters. None of them ever recorded. I've been kicked out of most every band I've been in, except my own bands. But I was kicked out of The Monsters... The Visitors disbanded and became The Monsters, so maybe I didn't get kicked out of that. But, yes, several projects, and the truth is I was learning a huge amount through playing with different people, which I think is a great way to improve your playing—playing with different drummers, playing with different guitar players. Glenn (member of The Monsters) was a great rock'n'roll guitar player who really helped me forget a lot of that—those six-to-ten hours a day hadn't done me any good. It might have made my hands stronger, but it made me sort of stiff and musical, and here we were trying to do stuff that was less musical. So he was unlearning a lot of stuff for me and making me learn to play more relaxed. The truth is I thought I always sucked. You know, The Twisted Roots record came out recently and I heard some of that stuff with a fresh ear, and I was like, "Hey, I wasn't as bad I thought I was."

Ryan: Did you form that right after Darby died?

Kira: Before he died, because The Germs weren't really playing that much and Pat (Smear, guitarist for the Germs and Twisted Roots) wanted to keep playing. I don't know how that happened. Maggie went to school with me. She was in twelfth grade at Hollywood High with me and she was this hippie chick and I used to sing Monsters songs to her and tell her



"The reason that I got my tattoo, which is the Black Flag logo, is because it means that whatever you do, do it all the way."

about the punk rock scene. I got her into the punk rock scene. I don't know how Paul decided she was the right ragamuffin image for his lead singer. She had this young boyfriend who played drums, Emil; and so Paul did all that, networking and who to decide who to put in and play. Then we had this friend Rick, who was the promoter guy, who got our first gig to headline at the Whiskey, which is kind of bizarre when you think about it. One of the reasons The Monsters never gigged was because Nicky (Beat, drummer from the Weirdos) didn't want to play unless we could headline The Whiskey first, 'cause coming from The Weirdos I guess he expected that. We couldn't get a gig headlining at The Whiskey, so we never played. But Twisted Roots did its first gig headlining at The Whiskey, on a weekend! That sold out, 'cause we had the right guy promoting it.

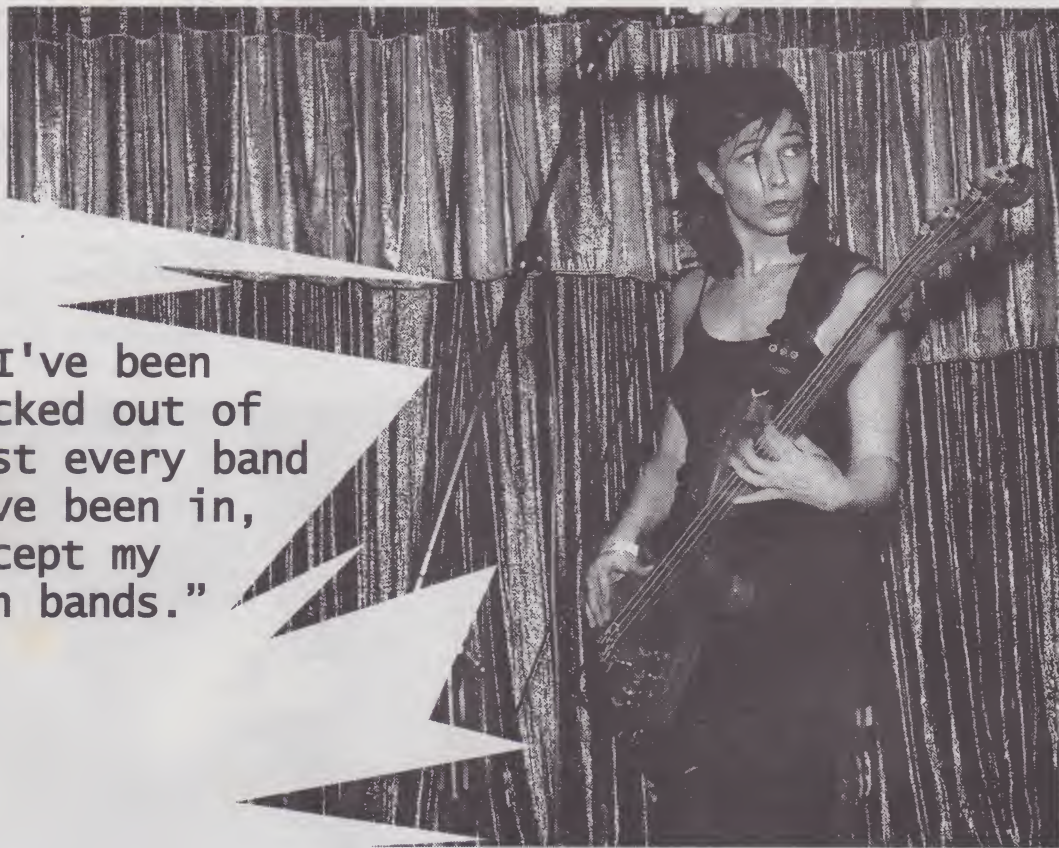
Ryan: You got pretty good press. I know Rodney Bingenheimer was spinning your single.

fun is that people have different ideas of what happened and history is a matter of who's writing the book. That's what is kind of interesting about it. There's this Germs movie now being made. There are people who are trying to tell the different stories. The Minutemen movie is coming out. Like a lot of movements, if you will, it was cliquey and there was a whole Hollywood clicky thing going, and the South Bay thing is what Penelope Spheeris decided to cover. Another thing is the timeline. The Screamers almost stopped by the time she was getting ready to make her movie and The Weirdos, too. They might be back now, but they were gone for a while! Rehash is so hip right now. Can you believe it?

Ryan: With Twisted Roots, was it a lot of lineup changes that led to its implosion?

Kira: The truth is, it's really hard to keep any band together. It's a marriage between four or five people, and marriages don't hold together that well. It is difficult personality-wise and very few bands can hold it

"I've been kicked out of most every band I've been in, except my own bands."



Kira: Well the truth is there wasn't that much vinyl of the local bands, so he was hungry for that. No, I think we were sort of shunned, really. I think that we weren't punk enough. It didn't really fit with what people were looking for. Again, that's my perspective. My perspective is nobody cared. We did those gigs headlining at The Whiskey, maybe a couple weekends like that. It was a small scene, though, so maybe we were big. I always thought of it as the really big bands were The Weirdos, The Screamers, The Germs, The Dickies...

Ryan: Three of those four bands were not in *The Decline of Western Civilization*.

Kira: But the *Decline* was focused on the South Bay area not everybody was down there. I was talking about the Hollywood scene which I was part of.

Ryan: Some people's grievances with the movie were the exclusion of The Weirdos and The Screamers.

Kira: Hey, the director gets to decide. Creative license. I work in that business. I know how it works. The director's in charge. But that's what's

together and want the same things. So I got thrown out and the band broke up.

Ryan: You got thrown out of your brother's band?

Kira: I should probably not say that. That's part of my story. I got thrown out of Paul's band. Paul was in charge. It wasn't that he wanted to throw me out, it was that one or more of the other people in the band didn't want to play with me anymore. He would go, "who's the better player?" And that's part of why I always thought I wasn't a good player, because it was, "Well, would I rather have Pat and Emil or Kira? Well, Pat and Emil." And it happened a couple times. So then he got Dix Denny (bass player for the Weirdos) and a guy named Gary Jacoby. Because the truth is usually when that happens, and this is what I learned, usually when someone says, "I don't want to play with her anymore. Get rid of her," they don't want to play, and she's the scapegoat. But that happens in hindsight. That's what kept happening. I would get thrown out and the other guys would leave anyway, and then he would reform it. He got Dix Denny and Michelle, who was my best friend from jr. high, and then I was welcome again, 'cause Dix and Michelle were my friends, too. We got Gary and we were

all happy again. I don't remember how that incarnation broke up. Then there were smaller incarnations, a four-piece incarnation, where Paul became the lead singer and we didn't have a girl lead singer. We even did that on tour with Black Flag. We did a version of Twisted Roots with DC3 opening for Black Flag. There were other things pulling. I was trying to do my own band for part of that time. Paul did Screaming Trees stuff. I went to UCLA. Although I played the whole time it did take a certain amount of energy. Like you said, and you put it very well, not everyone wants to work too hard. I think that's a factor, especially if some of you want to practice every day and the other guys don't want to show up. Practicing costs money. Usually, you have to rent a studio.

Ryan: I think one thing, with hindsight, in the initial scene, is how much you fought for it, especially Black Flag. People don't necessarily have to anymore; to use Mike's words, "it's normal for a kid to have a punk phase."

Kira: I don't know if I agree with that, 'cause the truth is, it's hard right now. If you want to start a band and figure out how to get gigs and tour and everything, it's really hard. I wouldn't know how to do it. I generally had help. People had connections and networked. Black Flag did one thing: they developed a national network of a touring thing, and that was something they did long before I was in the band. They developed and connected together the country, to a certain extent, for a set of bands that followed in the footsteps. It's hard for me to say it's harder, because I know people who are trying to get bands happening right now who are struggling, and that it's not that easy. Yeah, there are some clubs, but there have always been clubs. It has always been hard to get clubs to let you play. The bottom line is: if you can't draw they don't want to let you play—the same as then. One of the things that was playing against people was that the clubs thought "punk rock" meant violence. There was a little bit of a blacklist kind of situation going on. So I guess there was that element, that it was less acceptable. But the bottom line is starting a band is hard. Keeping a band together—relationship wise—is hard. Getting gigs is hard. Going on tour is even harder. Getting a record deal. This is all tough stuff, always has been. That's my take on it.

Ryan: When you started playing in Black Flag, what year were you in at UCLA?

Kira: I had completed three years, so I really only had one more year to go, which was part of why. I had never considered quitting. I told them that I have to finish, that I will take quarters off and make time so that we can tour, but they agreed to work around my schedule. I basically took every other quarter off and it took me five years instead of four to complete. They kicked me out right before my final quarter.

Ryan: During that time you were living in a van at one point, correct?

Kira: Keeping an apartment didn't make a lot of sense, 'cause I was gone half the year. So I was sleeping on my brother's couch, living in Bill's (Stevenson, Black Flag's drummer) van, I was living at the practice pad and I was on tour. It didn't make any sense to have a place. I didn't have

the money. My Dad was supporting me with college, but once I started taking quarters off I started feeling guilty about that arrangement, and told him he didn't need to support me anymore; because it was taking longer, because of the choices I was making. I couldn't really afford it and it made no sense.

Ryan: So, literally, it was either school or Black Flag for that period of your life?

Kira: Well, I would go to school in the morning and then come to the practice pad, and, usually, we would answer mail. It was a working office going on there. Then once everyone was there we would go down and play till we dropped. It took five hours a day most days. There wasn't much more time than that. I would go to school and play or tour. When we recorded, and this is probably just how I remember it, somehow I was always studying for midterms. We would have these forty-eight hour lockouts and we would play till no one could play anymore and I would be in the corner studying calculus. I could tell you the number of times that I was literally dropped off at UCLA out of the van from tour. My memory of it was that it happened more than once. You can imagine the look on the UCLA sorority girls' faces when Kira falls out of the van having been on tour for months, ready for the first day of class. Again, I'm probably over dramatizing it, but it definitely happened. We did it during the '84 Olympics. There was two weeks off of school so we did a tour, and then I got dropped off out of the van. But it was never about money. I joined my favorite band. I was thinking about getting the tattoo before I joined the band. I had to get it once I joined! It was like that. They, literally, were my favorite band. So there was no question in my mind about whether I wanted to do it. Looking back, they were putting up with a lot of hardships working around my schedule. It was part of what became the problem for them. We did a winter tour in central Canada, and that was because of my schedule. They were impacted severely and so was I. It was a tough thing and, like I said, touring and having a band is tough stuff. It isn't for the weak at heart. You know, ask Mike. Give up or get in the van again.

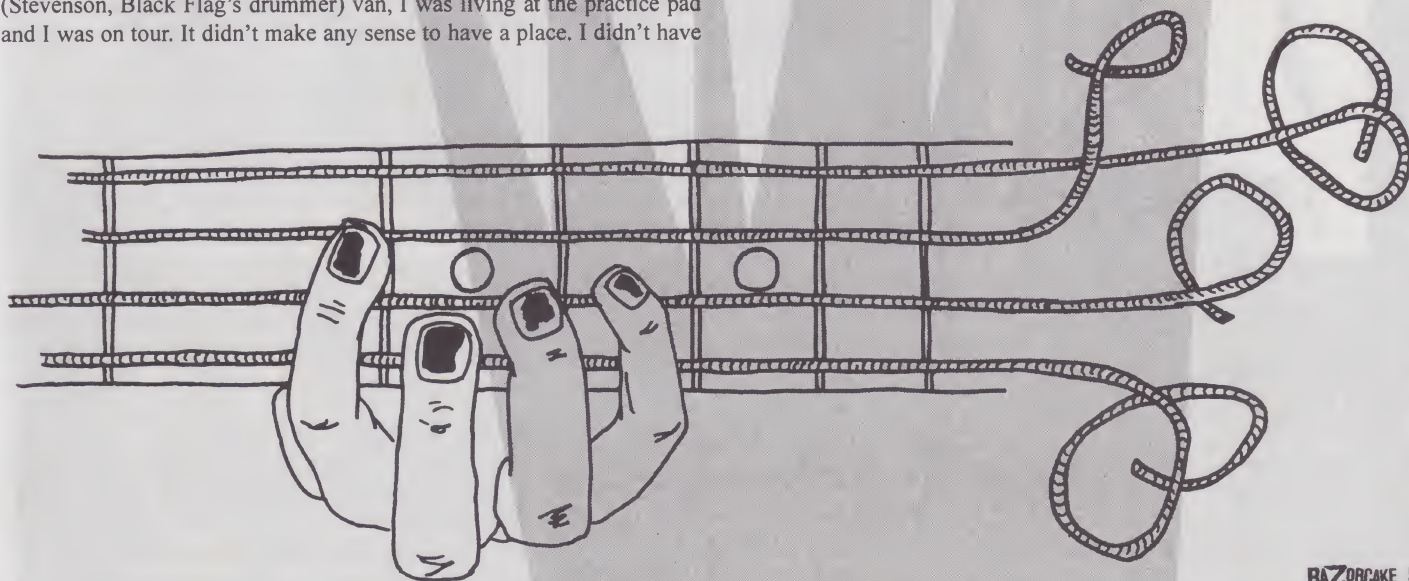
Ryan: Did you read Henry Rollin's diaries?

Kira: You mean while he was writing them? No.

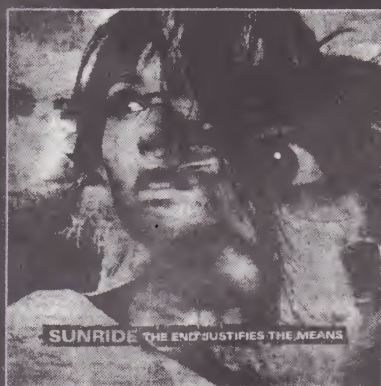
Ryan: No. He published them.

Kira: The *Get in the Van* book? I think my first exposure to that was I was being interviewed and someone plopped in front of me some highlighted portions about me. My first exposure was the negative stuff. Then I saw it at some bookstores and got exposed to it more from a marketing standpoint. Anything you want to know about my experience of that?

Ryan: Well, maybe some of your feedback. Like you said, it was a family thing there. The one thing I really get out of that book is just how hard you guys worked during that time. I know very few people that would give what you guys gave during that time.



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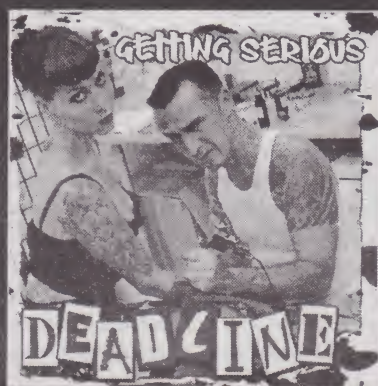


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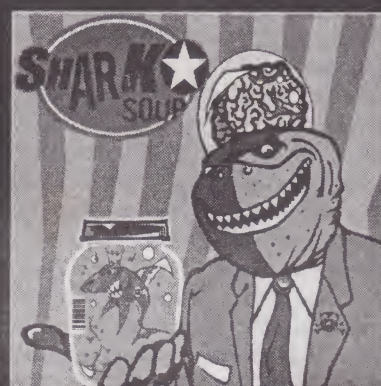


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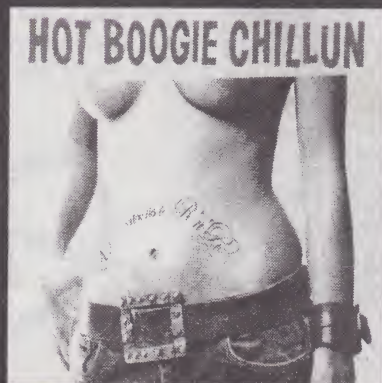
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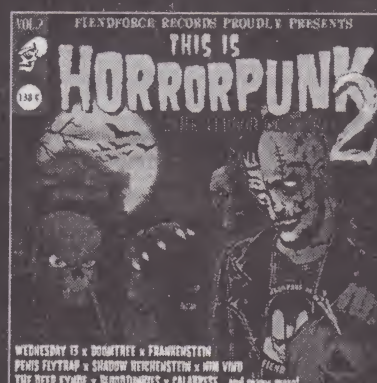
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Kira: I think you have to take it with a little bit of a grain of salt. If you think about what you would write in your own journal, or what I would write in my own journal, and what reality was when you looked back on it, it might have a little bit—that exhaustion that you're feeling, that perspective—might be a little skewed because "It is my journal, because it is my opportunity to have self pity and my little self-centered perspective on what's going on." So although I think it's totally sincere, I think reality is a little different—from all of us. Yeah, it was difficult, it was hard. We were tired and exhausted and fed up and yet we were grateful and happy to be doing exactly what we wanted to do. Catch me on any given moment and I would've been able to express either. So, I think it is a skewed perspective and that's not say that it's not true or real.

Ryan: One thing I get out of it is the dedication your band and SST bands had. One other thing that was interesting: he talks about you getting into a fight with a girl in a bathroom. Is that what hurt your hand? 'Cause Michael Azerrad wrote a book (*Our Band Could Be Your Life*) saying that you suffered an injury that you were plagued with for life.

Kira: Well, it's funny how reality goes. I'm sure it's everybody's own perspective. My hand was already injured when that happened. I was in Long Beach and Black Flag was playing an instrumental gig. Ten minutes before we go on, I go into the bathroom and this very large woman kicks the crap out of me, and grabs my right hand, which has all these problems, and bends it back, which is why I know that it's an inside job and that someone told her I had a hurt hand. It's complicated in that she went after my weak spot. At first she tossed me around a little bit, and it didn't hurt, so I just kind of let her. Then she got me on the ground and started smashing my head against the floor, and grabbed the hand and bent it back, and that's when I got kind of sick of it and kicked her off me. Girls were screaming and running and I knew they would go get the guys, and the guys did come and she ran away. They chased after her and didn't find her. Yeah, she hurt an already injured hand, and you know what? Her goal was for me not to play that night, so I played that night. That's what it comes down to. That's my ego and my competitiveness again. It hurt and it hurt

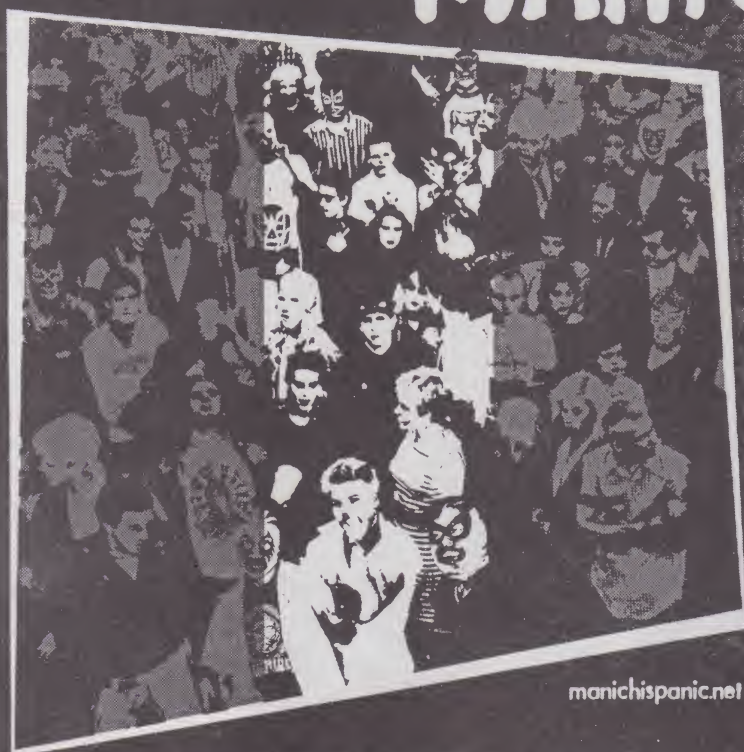
later. I think both my weaknesses and strengths are that I really don't want my weaknesses to supercede. When I hurt my hand, which was the first week I was in the band, my doctor said don't play for six weeks. I'm a girl and I just joined Black Flag. Am I not gonna not play for six weeks 'cause my hand is hurt? Four days later I'm back at practice and my hand has never been the same. That was my choice. They would have let me not play. They said take whatever time you need. My ego wouldn't let me do it. I gotta be tough. I've suffered everyday since. It's not as bad as all that, but my hand didn't heal properly because I did that. It was the same thing that night in the bathroom. She kicked the crap out of me, she won, it hurt, I could have gone crying home, but you know what? I'm looking at these guys and they're ready to play and I'm like, "Can I play?" And I decided I could. I suppose if couldn't have, I wouldn't have. We never did not play a gig because of any of our pain. All of us had times when it seemed like we wouldn't be able to: where Henry's voice seemed like it was gone or where Bill [laughs]—you know, Bill's kick drum thigh was twice as big as his other thigh. There was a lot of physical pain. I played with a 102 fever in London, the only time we played there. It would have taken a lot for me to not play any gig for anything. You might have caught me crying backstage afterwards or sticking my hand in the ice bucket, but, you know, that's ego in a way. The same thing is true with Dos today, though. It would take a lot for me to miss a Dos gig. That's the bottom line. Something would have to really be broken to the point where I really couldn't do it. It's not just about Black Flag or even those guys. Of course, it helps if you know that they would do the same and that you're all in it together. You don't want to be found to be the weak link, especially as a girl in that band. Remember what Henry said: "I might not like her but I respect her." The classic quote! I never wanted to let him see that I was vulnerable or weak.

Ryan: You guys have smoothed everything out?

Kira: The truth is there wasn't that much to smooth out. One of the great things about that band was that it was very professional. There wasn't a lot of screaming, there wasn't a lot carrying on. Now maybe that caused

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problems 'cause some of that needs to be aired, and we could debate the value of depressurizing the situation by discussing, but that's not the way it was. We were professional. We didn't fight. We didn't carry on at each other. We treated it like work. There was a lot of value to that, especially when you were tired. You just went on, and shut up and play and don't talk about it. It was a pleasure that there wasn't screaming and fighting going on, I'll tell you that. Like the last time I saw The Minutemen play. They were opening for REM and George, D. Boon and Mike had this big fight and they were in opposite rooms. It was great, you know. I always want to remember them that way, in a way, 'cause it was the epitome of their relationship. They could and we couldn't. In a way, it was cool. They could scream and fight and love each other and play and we couldn't. We had to do the professional thing, which had its advantages.

Ryan: The second side of *My Way* has this stigma of the audience not appreciating it. Was that...

Kira: That's funny. You know I didn't play on that record.

Ryan: Yeah, I know. Greg did.

Kira: But I did play on that tour.

Ryan: Yeah, you did.

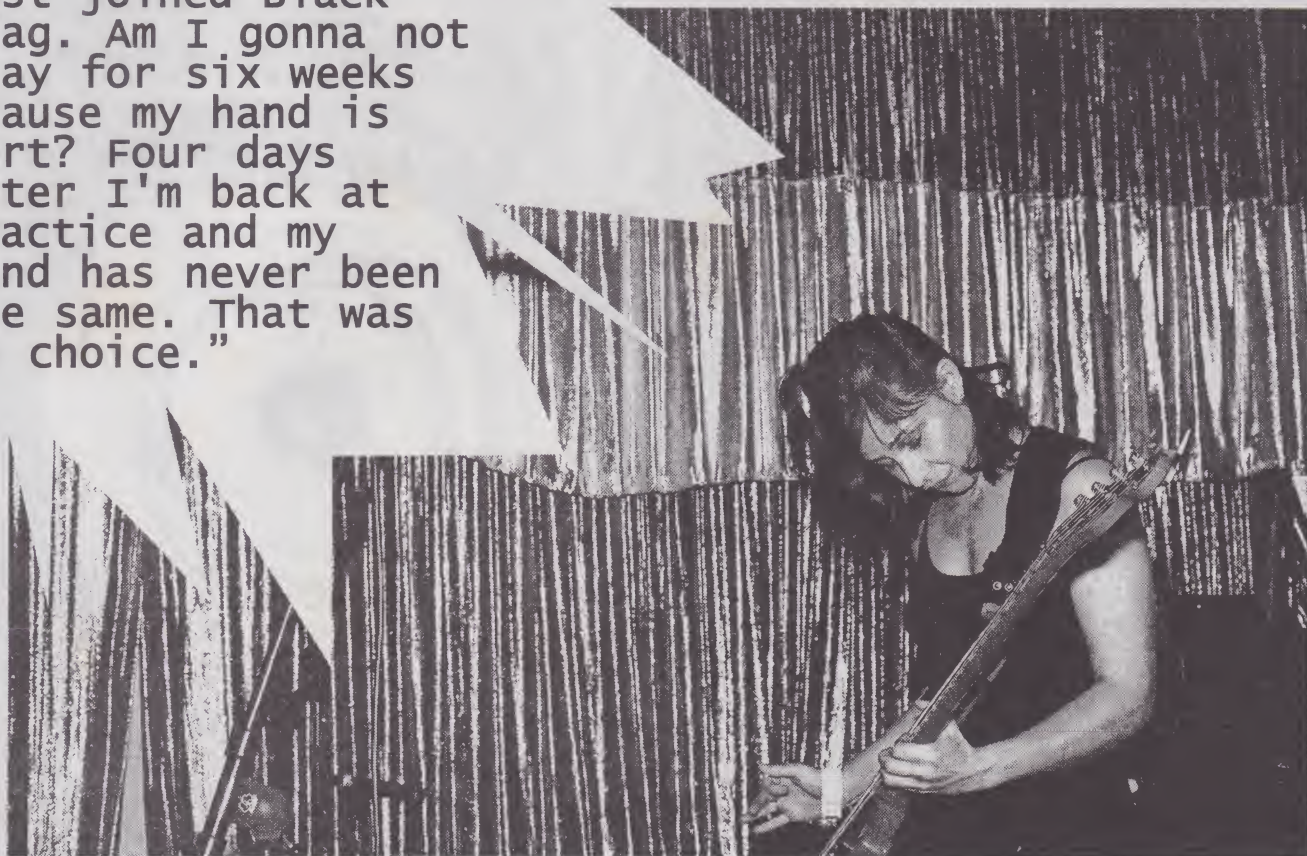
Kira: And we did generally always played side two in its entirety on that tour. It pissed, yeah, but let's face it, you have this body of songs. There are three slow dirges. What are you gonna do? Mix it up or put 'em all together? And I'm like, "It's a concept!" Side two! It was my idea to put side two on the back of the t-shirt. As a matter of fact, one of those songs is the song I broke my hand—I'm exaggerating—hurt my hand on. One note. "Excuse me, I need to go to the hospital now." People had this idea of what punk rock was suppose to be and side two didn't fit. Bottom line: it wasn't fast. It was slow and painful. It was nonconformist, which, by the way, is what punk rock is all about, so screw them. That is part of what Greg, and all of us behind him, always believed. We are not going

to do what they want us to do. We are going to keep growing, we're going to keep changing, and maybe we're going to lose some fans. If they want us to keep playing *Damaged* forever, it ain't going to happen. Especially after the injunction, where for long times we couldn't put records out. We had all this material. We wanted to do new stuff. Greg was sick of doing old stuff. He had new things to express and side two was part of it. It was kind of like, if you don't like it, you don't like Black Flag anymore. We're okay with that, 'cause this is what we want to do. To play that kind of music, you can't really care if it's not going to conform to somebody's idea of what it should be. You know, do I want to go hear X still playing the same songs they were playing fifteen years ago? No, I would rather see them do something new and interesting and different. That's my perspective. Somebody else might want to see them rehash the old stuff. You take your pick!

Ryan: I always thought that even the smaller things, like Henry and Greg growing their hair out.

Kira: I had the shortest hair in the band in '84. It's a thing about nonconformity. Most of us, who were really punk rockers, that's what it was about. As soon as punk rock was a little too hip, you were going to stop doing it. Henry was a skinhead and then he had long hair. You know, hair grows by the way if you don't keep cutting it. And Grateful Dead—some of the people involved really loved that band and listened to the music. It wasn't just a statement. They actually were behind it. It wasn't my musical taste, but there were others who it was their musical taste. I think there was an identification with the touring. I think Black Flag had a girl in the band because they thought it would mess with some peoples' heads. I didn't know it. You know, I didn't really realize what I hadn't gotten myself into in terms of that until I saw the cover of *Slip It In*. I thought, "Maybe they don't just like my bass playing. Maybe it wasn't all about my bass playing after all." The way it happened, that I got into the band, really made me think it was about my bass playing.

"I'm a girl and I just joined Black Flag. Am I gonna not play for six weeks 'cause my hand is hurt? Four days later I'm back at practice and my hand has never been the same. That was my choice."



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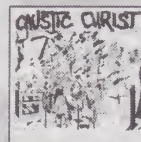
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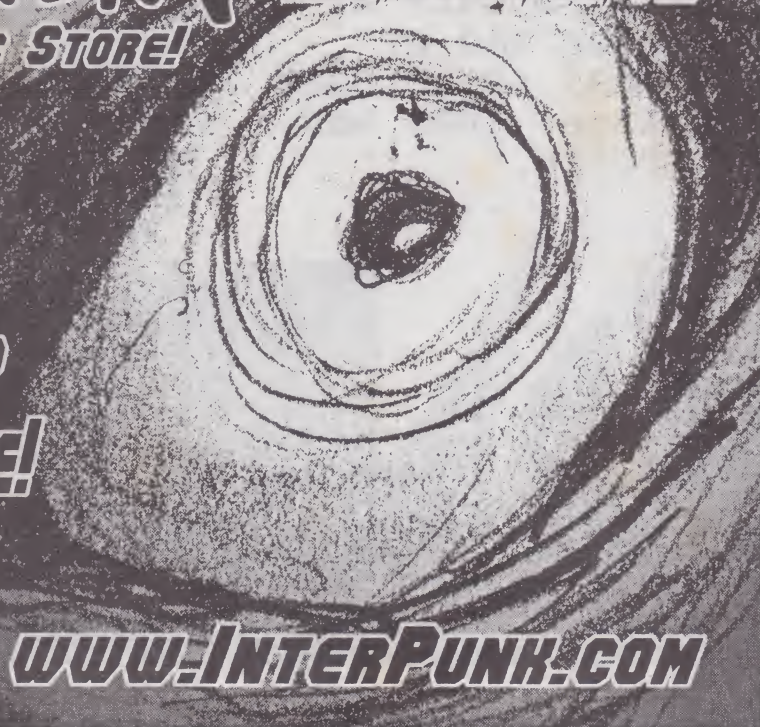
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Henry called me up and said, "All right, you should go jam with those guys after the DC3 practice." And I was like, "Okay." I hung around and said, "So, do you guys wanna jam?" And they're like, "Oh, yeah. You wanna jam?" They didn't even know. I was like, "I thought this was arranged." So we jammed and then they asked me to join. They were my favorite band so I joined. I didn't really recognize that they might have interesting ideas about women and that me being in the band was controversial. I didn't think that way until I saw the cover of *Slip It In* and I kind of realized, for one thing, they certainly didn't glorify women. That cover does not glorify women, and that's okay with me, 'cause I don't glorify women. You know, for a long time, and sometimes I still do, I think men are superior. Well, because my theory is we're equal in many ways, except men are physically stronger. So if we're equal in all other ways and men are physically stronger, then men are superior. You get my idea. I didn't really suffer a feminist bent. I didn't want to be a good girl bass player.

Ryan: Do you think that you would have stayed in the band and continued with music or would you have followed a career after that?

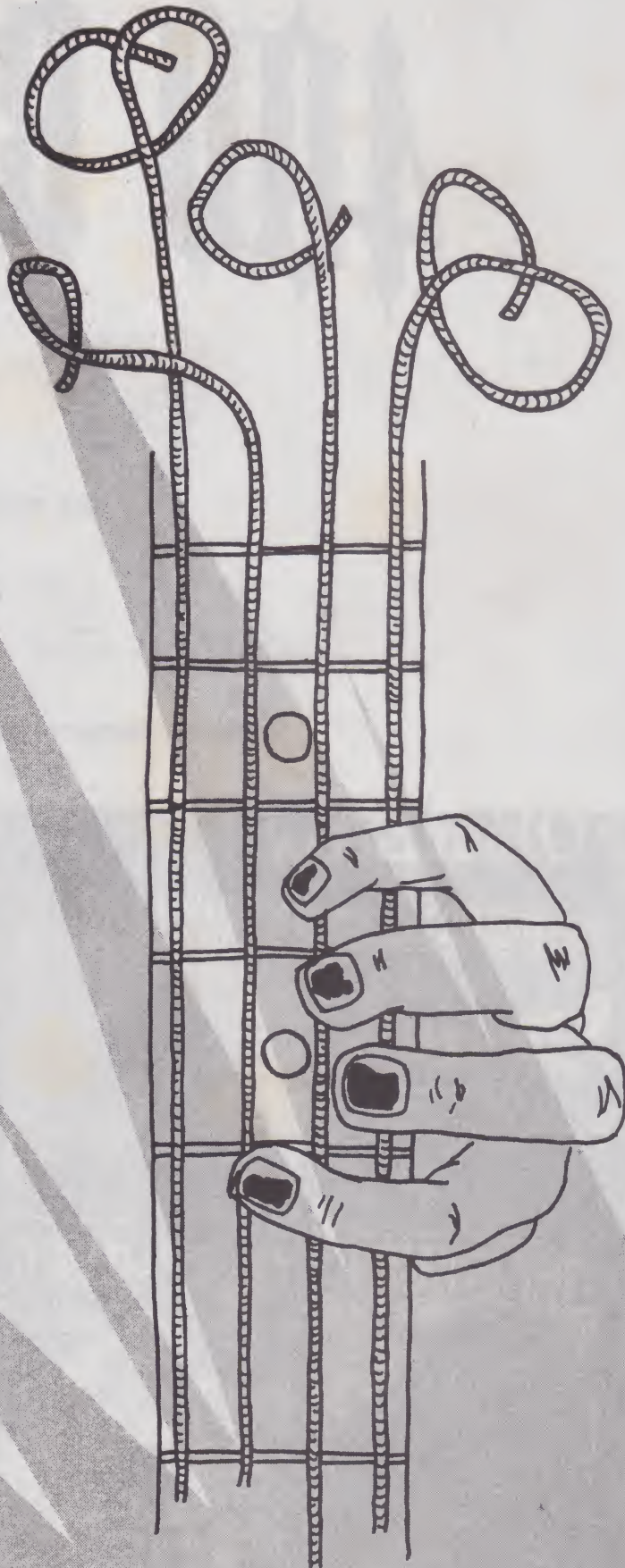
Kira: How hard we were working, it was hard to imagine that going on forever. There wasn't a lot of money. To anyone who's not clear: there wasn't a lot of money. Ten bucks a day per diem on tour. We're living in the van. Financial security never seemed possible there. That didn't mean that I wouldn't have done it for a few more years with all that involved. I sort of always knew that I would want some financial security at some point and finishing school was directed at that point. The only other time that I did just music for a year I was bored. So there was part of me who never thought I could be totally intellectually stimulated just playing music. Who knows what might have been, 'cause I didn't have the choice. I got asked to step down and did my last quarter and went and got a job.

Ryan: And during that time you were writing songs with Mike for the last Minutemen album?

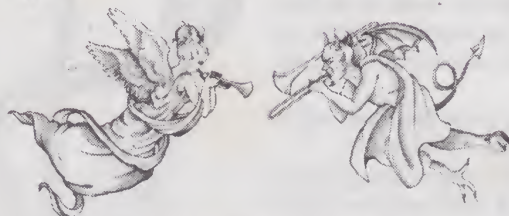
Kira: The Minutemen opened the first week of the 1985 tour, which was a four-month tour, and Mike and I stayed up all night talking in the van a couple of times. One of the things we talked about was that he wanted me to try to write some lyrics. During that tour I wrote them and sent them home and he incorporated some of those into, not just *3-Way Tie for Last* but then also *FIREHOSE*. I continued to write some lyrics, but that started on that tour.

Ryan: The songwriting process that you were doing with Mike there, was that similar to what you did in Dos?

Kira: No. Actually that resulted out of two totally different things. The lyric writing thing, in a sense, is a detached thing. I write a poem and I have no attachment to it and it's his to decide to do with it what he will. The Dos thing, when D. Boon was killed, I was dating Mike. I was out of town when I got the news. I came back to town and Mike was in his room and he didn't want to play bass anymore, and he didn't want to leave his room. Somehow, luckily, I was sort of a bright spot in his life. What I tried to do to get him to play again was I had been doing, these story tapes, bedtime stories for my nephews. I had these bedtime stories where I would read the stories and do two intertwining basses for the music. It was my little music project, 'cause I didn't have one anymore. I had this thing with two basses so I just tried to get him to jam with me in the room, 'cause he didn't want to let me leave the room and because he would let me come over. It was one of the only things he would let happen right then when he was in his sadness. So, I got him to pick up his bass again. The real connection creatively for me was this story-tape stuff. Some of our early jams became early Dos songs. Some of the story-tape stuff, like there is a song called "The Rabbit and the Porcupine" and "The Slow Little Turtle." These are songs from little animals stories that I did and wrote two bass lines and he learned. It either evolved from jams that we did during that time when he wouldn't come out of his room. I'm exaggerating, but I thought he might never play again. I was scared that somehow he had to get past the idea that he couldn't play bass with anyone else. So it was just we gotta have a new project. I needed a new project. *FIREHOSE*: I'm sure you've heard this story. That wasn't his idea. Ed showed up at this door.



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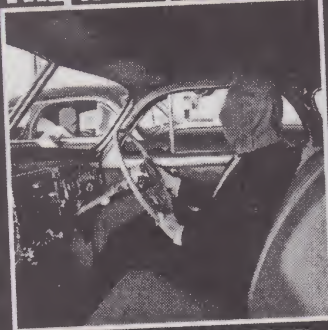
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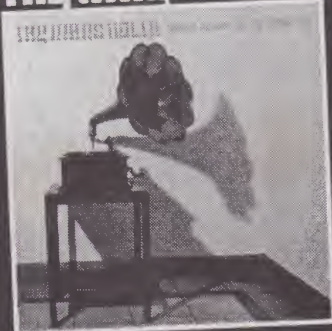
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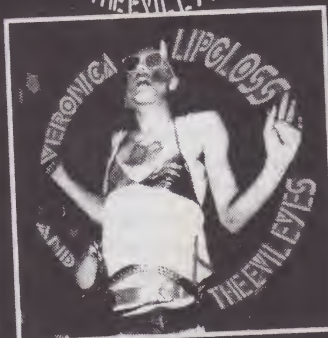
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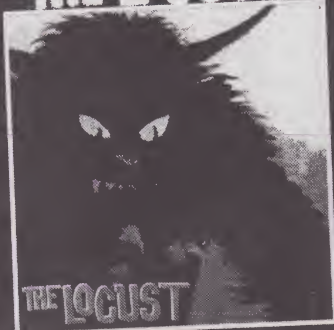
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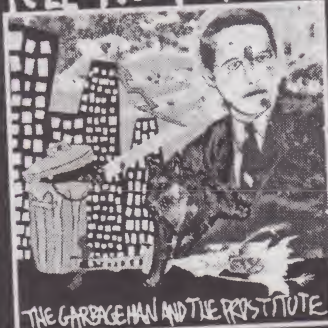
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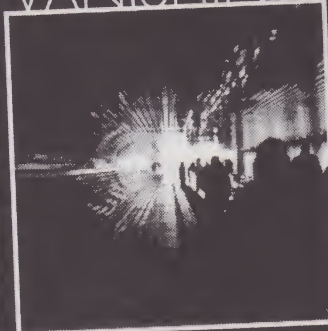
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Ryan: From Ohio.

Kira: Right. I don't know, without a kick in the pants, if he would have done either.

Ryan: You're really into a lot of Spanish music and guitar?

Kira: I'm into Spanish, the language, and the Spanish music is more of an extension of that. I just try to keep my Spanish fresh, so I listen to Spanish music and watch Spanish TV and see the variety shows. I listen to love ballads, K-Love. They play them over and over again and I get to know them. So it's good practice for my singing and for my Spanish, but I'm not really attached to most of it as a musical style.

Ryan: You were talking about Henry doing a Black Flag thing. Greg did a Black Flag thing, too. Did he ask you to play?

Kira: I heard through the grapevine that we were all welcomed—after the fact. I have to be really careful, 'cause I don't want to do anything to hurt anyone or say anything negative about anybody. I love Greg. I want him to be successful. If he said that I was welcome, I wish I would have put some effort into it. I made an assumption, which was the wrong assumption, perhaps, that he wouldn't want me, so I didn't seek out to do it. I would have, if nothing else but to mend fences. I would have done it, no question about it. I would have done it in order to support him doing his thing and clear away old stuff. I've heard mixed things about it in terms of people saying they really enjoyed it and that they didn't enjoy it so much.

Ryan: You didn't happen to catch it, did you?

Kira: No.

Ryan: They had a bass loop.

Kira: Yeah, I know. It was in three parts. One of them was recorded with Dale Nixon. Makes perfect sense to me. He was the player on *My War*.

Ryan: Wasn't that a pseudonym for Greg?

Kira: Yes, it was Greg. It is Greg, and that's my point. That seems appropriate. I support them in what they do. There are no hard feeling here.

Ryan: You were talking about the Dos record. It's been a while. When is that one gonna be released?

Kira: It takes forever to do a Dos record, what can I say? So it's almost recorded three-quarters of the way: the Dos record, *Numero Quatro*. The songs have been mixed, so we have a few more songs we're working on. The problem with doing a Dos record, aside from the fact that Mike is always on tour and that when I work I'm very busy, is the simple thing that it is all in the song. It's not like you can have a very simple song and do a lot of layers. There are just the two basses. So it's all in how our basses intertwine. It's all about the writing and that is sometimes a slow and painful process. On top of that there are months and months where we don't get together. So we lose progress, and then we get it together, and I work with tapes. So it's just a long and slow process. It has been discouraging. There was a point at which I didn't want to say that we were doing a record anymore, 'cause I'm tired of saying that we are doing the next record. But he got Pro Tools at his house and that has really helped, because we didn't have to get seventeen songs together and go into the studio. We've been able to do them one at time and we're really starting to see the light at the end of tunnel. It's discouraging and yet we're not going to stop. We've been together twenty years and we're going to have our fourth record. If I tried to be realistic, the end of the year is the earliest it could be done.

Ryan: And you are a sound editor?

Kira: I'm a sound editor.

Ryan: How did you get into that?

Kira: I was working in the corporate world as a computer geek. It didn't suit my personality in multiple ways, including the way we've been talking about my tendency to do it all the way, in that in a big corporation you're a cog in a very large wheel; and that what you do individually is not important. What I've come to learn is that working in smaller teams, probably in any industry, is more suited to me, because then what I do is critical to the path, to the success. So I work for a small sound company, because my brother introduced me to this guy. We did this band thing and that's how I met Brian. Basically, I twisted Brian's arm into hiring me. He didn't want to. He had a very small company. He didn't know how it was going to work. What happened was exactly what I expected to happen. Things got busy and he needed help so he started throwing more and more work at me. Dialog editing and ADR (Automatic Dialogue Replacement) tends to be the female in sound, so often sound affects are the guys, and I started working toward that. I came to realize, working in a smaller company, was that it's important to me that what I do matters. In a corporate world, that didn't matter. I like my work to make a difference.





BILLY ZOOM MUSIC

Interview by Julia Smut

How do I write an intro for this? Billy Zoom needs no introduction. He is, without a doubt, a "nice guy and a punk rock legend," but for those of you who don't quite get it... I guess I have to state the obvious.

Billy Zoom, musician. Founding member and obscenely talented guitar player for X, the band. His father was an old "jazzier" and played with Django Reinhardt in Belgium. He witnessed the birth of rock 'n' roll, as we know it. What this guy knows about music could fill this magazine, probably for a year or two and now I have the task of bringing it to you in a few pages? Just know this interview is truly the tip of the iceberg and I skipped the stuff he's been asked a million times before. Go to his website and borrow a copy of X: the Unheard Music for more background. These days he owns and operates Billy Zoom Music, a tube audio repair shop, and his recording studio, Studio A in Orange, CA.

Every once in a while, I meet someone that has had a Billy Zoom encounter of some sort. It seems like many of these people don't "get him." I'm not really sure what that means or what their expectations are. He's not sure either. I can't really remember what I "expected" before I had actually met him. I remember one email I got from BZ that had me laughing for days. He was making a comparison between artists and musicians. I can't remember his exact words but it was something about how artists don't go on tour, sit on stage, and paint the same picture in an hour and a half, night after night. No one ever yelled, "Hey Picasso, do the lady with the three tits!"

My advice would be: don't try to make bullshit small talk, and if you're asking him a question, make sure it has an answer. Maybe he'll give you a few answers, many of which you didn't expect. Just hang in there. Eventually you'll find a comfort zone... and if worse comes to worse, bring up British cars or motorcycles. -Julia

Julia: Name, age, and occupation?

Billy: Billy Zoom, fifty-seven, occupation undetermined.

Julia: Where did you grow up? What part of the country?

Billy: Illinois. The boonies.

Julia: You come from a musical family. How far back does that go?

Billy: I don't really remember past my grandparents. My dad's mother played piano and accordion. She had a sister who played the theatre organ in silent movie houses in the '20s. I had an uncle Robbie who played the violin. Actually, I had a great grandmother, who was dead by the time I was born, who had some music published and had a music degree from the University of Wisconsin, which was unusual for a woman back at the turn of the last century.

Julia: Do you have brothers or sisters?

Billy: No, I'm the only child of

an only child.

Julia: What was the first instrument you played?

Billy: Define played. [laughs] The first one I

"I don't think I really got into rock 'n' roll until about '62. I think you have to reach puberty and have the testosterone has to kick in and then all of the sudden it makes perfect sense to you. Otherwise, it's just a bunch of people jumping around acting silly."

had lessons on was... I'm not sure. Accordion, piano, or violin. They were all about the same time.

Julia: Did you have a favorite?

Billy: I think I wanted to play guitar.

Julia: Even when you were that young?

Billy: Well, we were talking about when I was about four. I used to play ocarinas and tonettes and things.

Julia: What are they?

Billy: A tonette is one of those black plastic things, looks sort of like a recorder you used to play in school. An ocarina, they used to call a sweet potato. It's made out of baked clay and you play it like this [holds his hands off to the side, like you'd play a flute] and it was shaped like a sweet potato.

Julia: So as a teenager, what was your favorite instrument?

Billy: You just skipped a lot of my life.

Julia: I know. I go back and forth.

Billy: As a teenager I was a guitar player.

Julia: Starting at how old?

Billy: I started guitar when I was six.

Julia: By choice?

Billy: No... umm, well, maybe. These are hard questions. Nobody's ever asked me these questions before. See, my dad was a musician and the guitar was always in the corner and he would play and sing to me when I was a little kid: cowboy songs and stuff. I probably said, "Show me." He showed me C, F, G, and D. Do you know what a tenor guitar is? It's got four strings. It doesn't have the two bass strings. He had one of those and I started on that 'cause my hands were too small to play a regular six string. Then the next year, I think I was seven, I got a banjo. I used to take it to school and entertain the other kids.

Julia: Do you think you were destined for music?

Billy: Well, I hate to think I've been doing it wrong all these years. [laughs] My mother's first choice would have been a schoolteacher. Her second choice would have been anything but a musician or mechanic. My dad always wanted me to be a musician.

Julia: So by the '70s and '80s, guitar was mostly what you played?

Billy: I was a horn player up until about '62. I played in jazz bands and was planning on having a career as a jazz saxophone player. I played clarinet, alto, tenor and baritone sax, and flute. A lot of this won't mean anything to you 'cause

you're too young, but I went to the Stan Kenton clinics in the summers. I went to the University of Indiana and took music theory. In '62, I went to "Sock Hop" MC'd by Dick Biondi, who was the big DJ at WLS in Chicago, and they had a live rock band. It was the first time I'd ever

seen a live band play, other than jazz (bands). I watched the band really closely and I realized they were getting a lot of attention from my peers. I also realized that I could do what they were doing, 'cause I already knew how to play guitar, although I had never tried to play anything like that. So, I went home and stood in front of the mirror with the guitar and played, ya know, surf songs and stuff. I thought, "I can do this." I was a rock star in '67.

Julia: A rock star?

Billy: Yeah, I was a big star. The Loved Ones was the biggest band in the Quad-cities area in the Midwest. We'd get asked for autographs and we'd bring in about three to four thousand kids a week.

Julia: How old were you?

Billy: Nineteen. I thought it was going to be all up hill from there. I thought, "This is it. I've made it. I've arrived. It's just gonna get better and better and better." I had three cars, a motorcycle, a motor scooter, a room full of guitars. I was renting a house. I thought it was a done deal at that point. [laughs] Two years later, I was in Hollywood selling my saxophones to pay rent.

Julia: What age did you make a conscious decision that you were going to be a musician?

Billy: Probably... [pauses to think about it] I think it was around four. It was just expected of me, I think. That's why I took all the years of music lessons.

Julia: Do you think you had some sort of natural ability toward it?

Billy: I hope so.

Julia: Versus just having to work at it non-stop, just practice, practice, practice.

Billy: Both. It's both isn't it?

Julia: There are those people that don't really have "it," but want it and work super hard and practice and then there are those people who just pick up any instrument and can play it.

Billy: I hate those people. I think I have some natural talent, but it takes a lot of work to get it out.

Julia: Do think learning about music helped you a lot (like learning music theory) or was it an added bonus?

Billy: I think it helps. I think everybody should have at least a couple years of piano lessons before they play anything else. I think everybody should know how to read music and know basic music theory.

Julia: Were you a band nerd in school?

Billy: I was never a nerd, so, no. I was in the band. I was in the orchestra, the marching band, the pep band that played at the ball games, the jazz band, and a couple jazz combos. You have to remember that jazz was very big back in those days. It was actually on the charts and stuff.

Julia: Like big band stuff?

Billy: No, the hipper stuff like Dave Brubeck Quartet. "Take Five" actually charted in '61 or something like that. Dizzy Gillespie and Gene Ammons. There was no such thing as rock'n'roll when I started playing.

Julia: When did rock'n'roll come into play?

Billy: January '56.

Julia: Why then?

Billy: Elvis. The whole thing just broke open

overnight. Everything was Elvis. Just like January '64 with the Beatles. Elvis, just overnight, took over the world. Everything became rock'n'roll oriented. That's all that was on the radio and all that was on TV. It was all everyone talked about. It was a huge deal.

Julia: Did it seem like a good deal or a bad deal?

Billy: I don't know. My dad thought it was silly, but interesting. My mother bought all of Elvis' records, but hated Jerry Lee Lewis. It just kind of was.

Julia: How old were you?

"I think once the hippies killed rock 'n' roll there were a lot of disgruntled musicians, that had grown up with rock 'n' roll and pop music, and were looking for a way to take music back from the hippies."



Billy: When Elvis first came out, I was eight. My mother had all the early Sun stuff and early RCA stuff and I listened to that a lot. I don't think I really got into rock'n'roll until about '62. I think you have to reach puberty and have the testosterone kick in and then all of the sudden it makes perfect sense to you. Otherwise, it's just a bunch of people jumping around acting silly.

Julia: Is that what brought you out to Los Angeles?

Billy: L.A. was actually my last choice. I went from the Midwest to Boston because they had the "Bosstown Sound" going. It was being hyped by the media industry as the next big thing. I had a couple friends in Boston, so I went and lived on Beacon Hill for a year and a half, got absolutely nowhere. It was interesting to escape from the Midwest. The problem with Boston is that there are like three million college students. I may be exaggerating slightly, but you know, it's mostly students, which means that at any given time there are probably five hundred halfway decent rock bands that will play for beer. Half of them aren't bad, ya know. They're good enough to go get a bar gig, which makes it really hard if you're trying to pay the rent. About the only thing you could do is play

in soul bands in the combat zone. Anyway, it wasn't really working out, so I decided to pack up and go to San Francisco because I had some friends who were moving there. I spent almost two months in San Francisco and absolutely hated it. Took me a week to find a place to live then I got robbed the second week I was there. It (the music scene) was kind of all over there. This was '69. It was just a bunch of burnouts. I

came down to L.A. with some friends and they had a big rock scene happening on the strip.

Julia: Rodney's English Disco?

Billy: That wasn't happening yet. Rodney was Mayor of the Sunset Strip though. There were clubs like the Experience and Hendrix would show up every night and jam. Grand Funk Railroad was playing there. There were hundreds of people just milling around on the sidewalk and a big street scene happening. There seemed to be a lot more going on, so I decided to stay. And then, as soon as I got settled,

they closed all the clubs and closed the strip down. But it was a nicer place than San Francisco or New York. In those days, if you got two doors off of Sunset Boulevard it was little houses with yards and picket fences and little guest cottages in back you could rent for seventy five bucks a month. You'd have a garage and a driveway to park in and you could move your gear around. It was a lot easier living.

Julia: And better weather.

Billy: Much better weather.

Julia: So then what?

Billy: Then, I got a job playing in South Central with a band called Art Wheeler & The Brothers Love. We played three nights a week. I just kind of walked into that. Before that I had been playing mainly in black R&B bands.

Julia: Playing guitar?

Billy: Guitar and sax.

Julia: Both at the same time?

Billy: I built a stand that held a saxophone and a microphone and there was a little container on the back for my pick. I could throw my pick in there, play a sax solo, grab my pick, and in about one beat I could be back on guitar. So, anyway, I was doing that and I was doing session work and playing in a bunch of original

bands doing demos and... what do they call it when you play for free so people will see you? [laughing] Showcases!

Julia: [laughing] South By Southwest?

Billy: Yeah. So we were playing showcases and cutting demos and I was in dozens of bands. I played with Gene Vincent for a summer. When I was with Art Wheeler & The Brothers Love we backed up Etta

James and Johnny "Guitar" Watson.

Julia: Touring?

Billy: Not much touring then, unless you'd call going to Sacramento with

Gene Vincent a tour. At one point I got an offer from a friend in Boston. I went back to Boston for six or eight months and toured with a folk trio back there. Sort of a folk trio... I don't know *what* it was.

Julia: That doesn't sound very lively.

Billy: I was playing electric guitar and clarinet and flute, but I was playing through little three-watt amplifier and there was an acoustic guitar and an upright bass player. It was right at the beginning of that early seventies sensitive singer songwriter, James Taylor, Cat Stevens time, ya know? So it kind of fit in with that. Then I started this band called the Alligators. It was a bar band that played three or four nights a week. We were looking for punk. We were trying to figure out what punk was going to sound like.

Julia: This was before or after you read the Ramones review?

Billy: Before. The Ramones were the first ones to figure out what it sounded like. I think punk was a lot like rockabilly and rock'n'roll when it started. Back in the early fifties there were a lot of records that were almost rockabilly or almost rock'n'roll. You've got these music history buffs that will argue about "What was the first rock'n'roll record?" As far as I'm concerned, it was "That's Alright Mama" by Elvis Presley, because everything before that wasn't quite—it was like two-thirds of the way, three-fourths of the way there—they never quite got all the ingredients right. Elvis was the first one to really get the whole combination right and it just took off like crazy. He was the first then, all of the sudden, there was a hundred people, then two hundred, then four hundred, jumping on the bandwagon. I think it was the same way with punk. I think once the hippies killed rock'n'roll, there were a lot of disgruntled musicians who had grown up with rock'n'roll and pop music, and were looking for a way to take music and the radio back from the hippies. Take the art out and put the rock back in. The Ramones were the first one to get the whole thing right.

Julia: Interesting, because I've read interviews with others (musicians of your genre) who say



"Beat on the brat with a baseball bat. Buddy Holly wouldn't have sung that."

they think punk is "arty" and that's what punk is all about: art. Or that there's a lot of art in it. They were just artists trying to be arty and that's what they came up with.

Billy: There was a t-shirt that was popular in the early punk days, like '77, and it said "*Fuck art, let's dance.*" Have you ever seen that?

Julia: Nope.

Billy: We used to see a lot of those in the audience. There were arty people that co-existed in the punk scene. It was sort of integrated, but punk rock itself was kinda anti-art. It was an attempt to bring back the essence of rock'n'roll, which was *music for fun*. It just felt good. Because of the fact that they were trying to ace out hippie music and trying to take back something, there was this sarcastic edge to it. A humorous edge to it. Like the Ramones' lyrics. They're simple, straight-ahead rock'n'roll songs but they've got kind of funny, sick lyrics. [laughs] "Beat on the brat with a baseball bat." Buddy Holly wouldn't have sung that. It's not supposed to be anything except fun.

Julia: In other interviews you say you read a Ramones review and that got you interested in them. It said the songs were simple, no leads...

Billy: It was Patrick, the bass player in my rockabilly band. He brought me a review. I think it was the Roxy they played, and I had missed the show. What would that be, '76? '75-'76. Their first album had just come out.

Julia: Later, you knew Johnny Ramone. Did you ever tell him that's what got you into...

Billy: Oh yeah. I met Johnny Ramone because I did an interview where they asked me about the Ramones. The interviewer didn't have a very high opinion of the Ramones' guitar playing and was surprised that I'd be into that genre because I could play better. I said, "Hey, look. Can you name anybody that can play what Johnny Ramone plays, better than Johnny Ramone can? Does he not do it perfectly? Is it not a great concept? Didn't he come up with the

right sound and doesn't he do it perfectly and have you ever seen him make a mistake?" Frankly, I didn't know for years if that was all he could play or whether he could blow my socks off. I had no idea because what he played was brilliant. I found out years later that that was kind of all he could

play and he didn't care. Johnny read that interview and the next time we (X) played in New York there was a note from him at the hotel desk saying he'd like to take me to dinner. I went over to his place and looked at his baseball autograph collection forever.

Julia: Hmm. Baseball.

Billy: [laughing] Yeah, I never got that. I never know when the World Series is or who's playing.

Julia: I guess you gotta collect

something.

Billy: What about guitar collecting?

Julia: Yeah. Do you have a lot of guitars?

Billy: No.

Julia: Did you?

Billy: I had a few.

Julia: How long have you had that Gretsch?

Billy: That one?

Julia: Well, how many have you had?

Billy: I had three of the silver ones. I actually used two of them and the third was a fashion accessory. I got the first one in '77, and the one I have now I think I picked up about '83.

Julia: What happened to the first one?

Billy: I had to sell it to pay off the IRS. I had a few old Gretschs but when they started being worth thousands of dollars and I was poor I had to sell them to doctors and lawyers and dentists. I don't understand these collectors that will pay \$8,000 for a \$600 guitar that they can't play. I mean it's nice that they drove the price way up and I made a lot of money, but still. You know where I can get a clock that goes backwards?

Julia: Why?

Billy: I want to put one on the wall behind me in the bathroom so when I'm looking in the mirror I can see what time it is.

Julia: [laughing] Oh please.

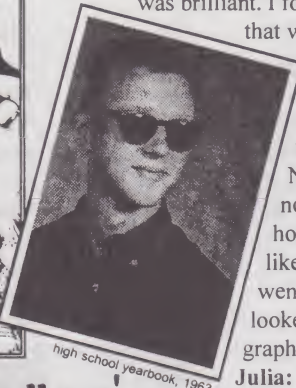
Billy: I think it would be cool. What was the question?

Julia: Let's go back to pre-X. You're still not "Billy Zoom" yet, right?

Billy: I became Billy Zoom in about '72. I had already been peddling demos all around Hollywood for a few years and had been rejected so I thought that if I did a fresh batch with a different name they'd get listened to more. I started recording as Billy Zoom in '74, I think. In the mid-seventies I was doing the Rollin' Rock Records stuff.

Julia: That was the "porn-movie" stuff.

Billy: Yeah. But the *Teenage Cruisers* soundtrack album. None of (those songs are) in the



movie. That was something that Ron Weiser, at Rollin' Rock, came up with in about 1980 to capitalize on the success of X and the Blasters. I did the entire soundtrack for the movie. It did have a version on "Bad Boy" in it, but it was the demo version. I've never been paid for any of that yet.

Julia: Were you supposed to be?

Billy: Yep.

Julia: Okay, so, you're in L.A. You've heard the Ramones and you like what they're doing.

Billy: I loved the Ramones the minute I heard them. They played the Gold West Ballroom in Norwalk and it just so happened that the company I worked for, my regular job, had just put in the sound system. I was an electronics guy. I saw the Ramones and said, "That's it. That's the

sound." I actually thought it was going to be the next big thing. I didn't realize it was going to be banned from the radio. That was Friday or Saturday and the Monday after, I put an ad in the *Recycler*.

Julia: And that was that.

Billy: Yeah, two bass players answered the ad. The second one was John Doe.

Julia: Anything you want to say about radio, the music business, bands today?

Billy: I wouldn't have much good to say about most of that stuff. Except, Lee Abrams is an asshole. You know who he is, right?

Julia: You told me, but tell everyone else.

Billy: He's the guy who came up with the concept of having formatted radio stations, where a station played just one type of music. Before that, radio stations just played hits. If the number one record was by the Beatles and the number two record was by Frank Sinatra and number three was by George Jones, that's what they played. The problem was, his formula didn't leave any way for anything new to come along. They'd monitor the ratings and playlists of major stations in key markets and feed the data into a computer. The computer would come up with a formula showing if you played these songs, this often, play these during drive time, play this one four times a day, play this one six times a day, play these songs more during the morning, then your station rating will improve. It actually worked. His deal was, you subscribe to my service and I'll send you a play list every week and if you do exactly what I tell you, I will improve your ratings.

Julia: Was that before or after payola?

Billy: Payola... I wish we still had payola. Payola got busted, like late fifties. Lee Abrams—this was all happening around the time punk started, mid seventies. The problem was, when it came to adding new records to the play list, the computers only had two criteria for deciding whether or not to add it. One was if a new album comes out by a band that has a good

track record, that has been in heavy rotation, and had hits—Journey comes out with a new record, Journey's last three albums have gone double platinum, Journey's new album automatically gets added. The other one was if a band comes out that hasn't had a record out before, they look at "Well, what is it like?" If people say, "It sounds a lot like Journey and Genesis," and people who like those records should like this, then they will put that in light rotation and monitor the ratings to see how people adjust to it. Something like the Ramones comes out that doesn't sound like anything that's been a hit and

"There is no such thing as making a recording that sounds like the band live, what you have to do is create the illusion of the band playing live, by doing something totally different."

they don't have a track record, it automatically goes on the "do not play" list. The Ramones and X and all those bands were always on it.

Julia: K-ROQ used to play X, in the early eighties.

Billy: K-ROQ was one of five non-formatted radio stations in the whole country. They were just a little indie station. They were in a little office in Pasadena and they had their broadcast gear mounted in milk crates in the corner. What happened is they got so successful they became the top rated radio station on the West Coast, got purchased by a big corporation, moved to North Hollywood, and KROQ became a programmer. They program the playlists for all the "alternative" stations in the country. So they essentially became Lee Abrams's competition.

Julia: I imagine he made a lot of money.

Billy: Actually, he got drummed out of the business and blamed for being the man who ruined radio. He's trying to make a comeback now with satellite radio. Do a Google search. He has his own website.

Julia: Have you been in X the longest of any band you've been in?

Billy: I left X for twelve years.

Julia: Right, but not including the break.

Billy: '77 to '85 and then like January of '86 I quit the band. Then I started playing with them again January '98.

[we attempt some math, out loud]

Julia: So fourteen years?

Billy: Is it?

Julia: I think so.

Billy: I believe X is my forty-fourth band.

Julia: Really?

Billy: I think so. I figured it out once, a long time ago.

Julia: If X hadn't reunited, would you have started another band?

Billy: I don't know. I have no idea.

Julia: No desire to start another band?

Billy: Well, I didn't have one in '98. [laughing] I had absolutely no desire, no interest in going back and playing with X again.

Julia: But it was a good deal?

Billy: Yeah. They made me an offer I couldn't refuse.

Julia: You had your amp repair shop?

Billy: Yeah, but I was just working out of my house.

Julia: You didn't have the studio yet, right?

Billy: No.

Julia: So, by playing the reunion shows you could do the things you had wanted to do?

Billy: Oh, yeah. That paid for the studio and the amp shop.

Julia: You've said you always wanted to be a producer.

Billy: Yeah. Well, not always. That didn't start until the late sixties. That started the first time... no, maybe the second time I did session work.

Julia: Because?

Billy: That's the cool guy. I like records and that's the guy that actually makes the

sound of the record.

Julia: Do you think to be a good producer you have to know how to engineer, too?

Billy: Not necessarily. A lot of them don't. I do. I don't think you have to actually be the one who does it. You have to understand how the stuff works, I think, to be good at it. Sometimes it's better to have someone else running that stuff because you can pay more attention. Sometimes I have another engineer in here, just not on the really, really, really, really cheap sessions. [Laughing, making reference to the Smut Peddlers' session in his studio.]

Julia: Easy. What's the worst experience you had in the studio recording a band?

Billy: Producing, you mean?

Julia: Where you're in charge and something's just not working and you have to make it work.

Billy: Oh gosh, I don't know. They're all that way. Not counting making X records?

Julia: Yeah. Just you in charge of some other band's session.



BILLY ZOOM'S

LONG LIST of required listening

King Oliver, *King Oliver Stomp*
 Bix Beiderbecke—anything with Frankie Trumbauer
 Le Quintette Du Hot Club De France (Django)—all 1930's sessions
 Benny Goodman Orchestra, *Sing, Sing, Sing*
 Glen Miller, *Greatest Hits*
 Andrews Sisters, *Greatest Hits*, but make sure it's the original recordings.
 Johnnie Ray—anything about crying
 Hank Williams—everything
 Elvis Presley—Sun Sessions, and first RCA album with the cover the Clash copied
 Jerry Lee Lewis—EVERYTHING!!!!
 Roy Orbison, *The Monument Hits...*, *Love Hurts*, *Pretty Woman*, etc.
 Brenda Lee—original hits, the Owen Bradley stuff
 Patsy Cline—original hits, the Owen Bradley stuff
 Buddy Holly Story, the album, not the movie!
 Little Richard, *17 Grooviest Original Hits*, or anything on Specialty
 Chuck Berry, *Greatest Hits*, or everything before London Sessions
 Miles Davis, *Kind of Blue*
 Dave Brubeck Quartet, *Time Out*
 Duke Ellington, *Three Suites*, *Ellington at Newport*
 The Coasters, *Greatest Hits*
 Muddy Waters—all the Chess hits
 Oliver Nelson, *The Blues* and the *Abstract Truth*
 Count Basie, *Hall of Fame*
 The Shadows, first two albums
 The Ventures, first two albums
 The Shirelles, *Baby It's You*
 Claudine Clark, *Party Lights*
 Fontella Bass, *Rescue Me*
 The Temptations, *My Girl*
 Bobby Bland, *Stormy Monday*
 Lonnie Mack, *Wham* reissued as *Memphis Wham*
 Jimmy Reed, *Honest I Do*
 The Miracles, *Shop Around*
 The Four Tops, *Bernadette*, *Reach Out*
 Betty Everett, *Shoop Shoop Song*
 Helen Shapiro, *Greatest Hits*
 Tommy Roe, *Everybody*
 The Drifters, *Under the Boardwalk*
 Gene Pitney, *Greatest Hits!!!!*
 Buddy Morrow, *Night Train*
 Etta James, *Tell Mama*
 Dusty Springfield, *Son of a Preacher Man*
 Aretha Franklin, *Respect*, *Chain of Fools*
 Steppenwolf, *Born to Be Wild*—listen only in mono
 Isaac Hayes, *Walk On By*
 Booker T. and the M.G.'s, *Greatest Hits*
 The Youngbloods, *Get Together*
 Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, *Clondburst*, *Twisted*, etc.
 Jimmy Smith, *The Incredible Jimmy Smith*
 Sergey Prokofiev, *Peter and the Wolf*, *Lieutenant Kijé Suite*
 Marvin Gaye, *What's Goin' On?*
 Ray Charles—just about anything
 Lloyd Price, *Stagger Lee*, *Just Because*
 Brook Benton, *Kiddio*, *Rainy Night in Georgia*, *It's Just a Matter of Time*
 The Who, *My Generation*—first album ONLY!
 Laurindo Almeida, *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*
 Earl Bostic, *Harlem Nocturne*
 Tyrone Davis, *Turn Back the Hands of Time*
 James Brown and the Flames, *Greatest Hits*, before Bootsy Collins
 Wilson Pickett—everything except *Icy Jude*
 Sam and Dave's *Greatest Hits*, but play it in MONO!
 Arthur Alexander, *Greatest Hits*
 Johnny Kidd and the Pirates, *Greatest Hits*
 The Pirates, *Castin' My Spell*
 Dave Berry, *The Cryin' Game*
 The Beatles—first album ONLY! (okay, maybe the first two, but that's it)
 The Searchers—first two albums
 Desmond Dekker and the Aces, *The Israelites*
 Heinz, *Movin' In*, *I'm Not a Bad Guy*, *Just Like Eddie*
 Moody Blues, *Days of Future Passed...* either vinyl or the *Superbimapped* CD
 Bay City Rollers, *Saturday Night*
 The Ramones—at least the first two albums
 Sex Pistols, *Never Mind the Bollocks* (this is still only "a partial list")

PAZORCAKE72

Billy: I don't know. There's always some big insurmountable problem that I have to surmount. Is that a word?

Julia: Yep. Do you think it's true that the better a band is, the less production they need?

Billy: Not necessarily. Good bands are good at playing live and recording isn't live. I think bands that have already made a lot of records and spent a lot of time in the studio sometimes need less production because they think that way. My favorite analogy would be: imagine there was a hit Broadway play that got rave reviews and people packed in to see it night after night after night. You were a movie producer and you were going to make it into a movie, so you took a camera, put it on a tripod, put it twelve feet out from the stage in the center, turned it on, had the actors perform the play, and you called that a movie. You get something comparable if you just record a live performance. There is no such thing as making a recording that sounds like the band live. What you have to do is create the illusion of the band playing live by doing something totally different.

Julia: At what point in producing a band do you say, "This is just what they do or can do. I think it should be different, but what I think isn't what they do." Or do you just say, "Do it this way?"

Billy: If they know what they want, then you try to create the illusion of what they want. You don't put yourself into it unless they don't know what they want, in which case they probably shouldn't be making a record, but sometimes that happens. Sometimes you run into, "We don't really know what we want, but we have this money." Then you have to make it into something.

Julia: So say you are producing this band and you like the song, you like what they're trying to do, but you think adding things here and there would really improve it, but a.) maybe they're not capable of playing what you're thinking or b.) they just don't get what you're saying.

Billy: That's a difficult situation. Who are you working for: the band or the record company? If the band is signed to a record company, the record company is paying for everything, then it's the record company you have to make happy. And they want something they can sell. It gets a little sticky if you're working for the band, because a lot of times you know something's best for them but they don't want that because it's not what they're used to.

Julia: Do you consider yourself a perfectionist?

Billy: No. I'm very pragmatic.

Julia: Name some records and artists that you think everybody should hear.

Billy: The Ramones, Elvis Presley's Sun sessions, *Kind of Blue*—Miles Davis, *Time Out*—Dave Brubeck, something done in Owen Bradley's studio like Patsy Cline or

Brenda Lee, *Johnny B. Goode*—Chuck Berry... how long is this supposed to be? This could go on for a long time. I have a long list of required listening. I think people should have a better sense of history so they would have a better understanding of how things got to be the way they are. Just in general, because I think if people understood how things got to be the way they are, things would be different.

Julia: Do you like live music?

Billy: Mmmmmmm. Not as much as much as I like records.

Julia: Why not?

Billy: Because it doesn't sound as good as a record. And I get antsy. Most people play too long. I can't really listen to the same music for more than half an hour. I've always been totally fascinated by the sound of good records, which is so much more than just the music. You miss so much in a live performance.

Julia: When you listen to a new record, do you pick it apart? Like, listen to the guitars, then...?

Billy: [big sigh] Oh, gosh. I pick apart the production.

Julia: Meaning? Not everyone knows what you mean when you say "the production."

Billy: The production. Ahh, it depends on what you're talking about by a modern CD.

Julia: How would you pick apart production if you don't know anything about the band or you don't know what they sound like live and you have no idea what they're going for?

Billy: As a producer, when I hear popular records, I pick apart the production because I like to think about what they're doing. I think about things like the over compression they're using, the sounds they're getting on it.

Julia: So you're listening to the sounds, arranging, and sound quality.

Billy: Again, what are we talking about?

Julia: About listening to a band you don't know anything about.

Billy: Are you talking about listening to hit records on the radio?

Julia: No, like if someone just gives you a CD and says, "Hey, tell me what you think."

Billy: Oh. Then I listen to everything, yeah. Are you talking about big name bands?

Julia: No. Something you have no reference to.

Billy: Oh, if they're a new band starting out that doesn't have a huge hit, then usually the recording isn't that good, so I kinda tune that out and imagine what it could be and listen to the song and the arrangements.

Julia: What do you think helped your career as a musician the most?

Billy: I think it's been a frustrating struggle from day one and still is, so I can't really answer that question.

Julia: So you probably can't answer the question, "What hurt your career as a musician the most?"

Billy: I'm still trying to have a career as a musician.

Julia: Well, good or bad, you've had one.

Billy: I don't know. To me, a career means

you're making at least as much money as the people in the audience.

Julia: At least as much or more?

Billy: At least as much.

Julia: You said to me once that the musician's union sends you an invoice for everything.

Billy: What I said was, "I can't fart without getting a call from the musician's union." The point I was making was I have enough of a name that I can't just go do stuff (we were talking about playing non-X shows). I don't have enough of a name that I can go do stuff and make it pay enough to be worthwhile. You were asking me why I don't I put a band together, why don't I do this, why don't I do that—because I'm Billy Zoom and people won't play with me unless I pay them to rehearse, because they think I'm a name and I have money. They think I should be able to pay them a hundred bucks a night for rehearsal. I can't afford to do that and it's that way all the way down the line. People have expectations.

Julia: I think you could find people willing to do it just because they like to play.

Billy: Yeah, but they can't play well enough to do my material.

Julia: I think you could find people.

Billy: See, you're expecting that I would do rock music. That would be the last thing in the world that I would do. I'm really not a rock musician. X is the only rock band I've ever played in. If I were going to play in another band, it wouldn't be doing rock music 'cause that doesn't interest me.

Julia: What would you play?

Billy: Almost anything except rock, which rules out almost all the drummers in the world today because they're all rock drummers. And almost all the bass players, too.

Julia: So, jazz?

Billy: I might play R&B or soul. I might play rockabilly. I might play jazzy stuff. I might play sixties beat music. I might play pop music, but I certainly wouldn't play rock. If you want professional musicians who play those other styles, they're expensive and hard to come by. That's why I don't put a band together. *But*, actually, I am putting a band together. We'll see if we can make it worthwhile.

Julia: You seem to have a very strong liking for British machinery and music.

Billy: I love British sports cars and British motorcycles.

Julia: And bands. Heniz...

Billy: Not really. From certain periods and certain British producers, but I don't think I'm partial to British music. I think I just love music. Joe Meek's recordings fascinate me, as a producer. The Heinz stuff, the stuff that Ritchie Blackmore did on guitar in like '63 to '65 is so far ahead of its time. When I first discovered that, I was just blown away. You've heard some of that, right?

Julia: You told me about it and I got the CD.

Billy: You have to understand that's when "I Wanna Hold Your Hand" was on the charts. Nobody had ever heard a guitar amp distort

BILLY ZOOM - Music 101

Pop: Popular music, as in anything that gets on the charts.

Rock and Roll: An aggressive form of popular music that dominated the charts from 1956 to 1966.

Rockabilly: An early form of rock and roll with no drums.

R&B: A type of rhythmic Negro music with simple chord changes (compared to jazz), and the accents on 2 and 4.

Soul: A type of R&B music popular in the mid to late sixties, performed by artists such as James Brown, Sam and Dave, and Aretha Franklin.

Rock: Drug-oriented white-boy music with distorted guitars and no soul.

Punk: Ultra-aggressive form of rock and roll which used elements of rock music to poke fun at rock. Created in the '70's by frustrated rock and rollers who wanted to rid the world of corporate rock, and revive rock and roll.



before and he's doing these over-the-top rock solos. It's pretty amazing, especially in some of the early stuff where it has absolutely nothing to do with the style of music they're playing, but it fits. Joe Meek amazes me because he was the first indie producer in England at a time when there were just a handful of big record labels that had big studios and all the people who worked in them had white shirts and ties and wore sports coats. Joe Meek had a studio that he built in an apartment and he built most of his own recording gear. He had hundreds of hits over there, not so many over here because, until the Beatles, no one over here knew the English had rock'n'roll. That was a big surprise. That was part of the Beatles phenomenon. It was, "They have rock'n'roll in England? I didn't know that."

Julia: So, you're not a huge Beatles fan?

Billy: I loved the first album. In fact, as far as most of those sixties English bands go, they all had one or two really good albums, which are mostly covers. They were great cover bands. The first couple Beatles albums are almost all covers. The first couple Stones albums are almost all covers. The first couple Searchers albums are almost all covers and on and on and on and on. Herman's Hermits. The Animals. And not just covers. Today, when people do covers, it's usually something obscure. They were actually covering songs that had just been on the charts here. The thing in England was to get the American releases as soon as they came out and try to get a copy (their own version) of it out in England before the American version broke over there. The thing that I think is funny, is when everybody went nuts with the British Invasion in '64, we were buying the Beatles and the Stones and the Searchers and all these bands doing covers of songs that had just been top ten hits the year before. The other thing that surprises me is how many people say, "What do you mean, the Beatles do covers?" "Haven't you ever heard

"Twist and Shout"?" "Yeah. It was a cover?" "Yeah, it was a top ten hit by the Isley Brothers a year before the Beatles recorded it." What was the question?

Julia: Uhhh, do you like the Beatles?

Billy: I like the first album a lot. I liked their second and third albums okay. I hate the arty stuff. I hate *Sgt. Pepper*.

Julia: Hate it or you don't get it?

Billy: I despise it. Oh, I get it. I don't think most people get it. They were making fun of English vaudeville shows that they listened to on the radio when they were kids. I'm old enough to remember those vaudeville shows and, to me, there was absolutely nothing new on *Sgt. Pepper*. It was a parody of stuff that I'd heard as a kid. I think there's a whole generation of people who thought that was something new, ya know? It's a spoof on stuff that was happening on the radio in the forties, and in England it carried into the fifties 'cause they didn't really have television. They were about a decade behind us on a lot of stuff. They didn't have things like tape records and televisions and meat. Meat was rationed up until the early sixties. Steel was rationed. You know, most of those English bands in the sixties had to make their own guitars and amps 'cause they couldn't buy them over there.

Julia: Yeah, I think in one of those Clash movies they talk about making amps out of dresser drawers.

Billy: There's a book called *17 watts?* that you should read.

Julia: By who?

Billy: Mo Foster, and he tells the story about the title. There was an amp called the Watkins Dominator and it was seventeen watts. It was the biggest amplifier you could buy in England. Vox had their AC15, which was the biggest amp you could buy, then Watkins came out with the one that was 17 watts. Then Marshall came out with an amp they claimed was 18 watts, which was the exact same amp, different cabinet. But anyway, the thing is, he was in a band and in those days the whole band would play through one amp. The lead, rhythm, bass and vocals: all through one amplifier. They were playing gigs and saving up their money to buy a bigger amplifier so they could play halls. Two of the guys wanted to get one of these Watkins amplifiers and they had an argument because the other two members thought that that was over the top, that was more amp than anybody would ever need.

Julia: And now look where it's at... 400 watt bass amps. It's insane.

Billy: It is insane. It's counter productive.

Julia: So why is X so loud [smiling]?

Billy: Relatively speaking, X isn't really that loud.

Julia: The guitar is loud.

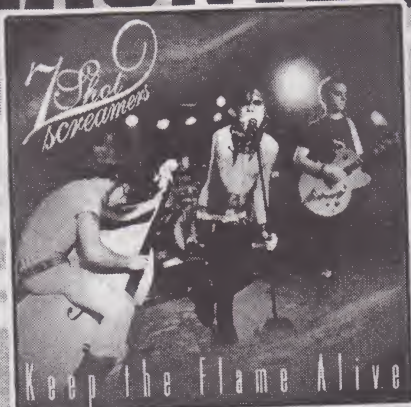
Billy: 50 watts.

Julia: Yeah, but it's loud.

Billy: 50 watts.

Julia: Louder than other 50 watt amps.

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THE STAGGERS "The Sights, The Sounds, The Fear and The Pain" CD

Finally this Texas punkabilly classic, their 1st album, is back in print w/ new bonus tracks, layout and 3 b-movie music videos. Fans of everything from punk, oi, 'billy, country, and even the odd spaghetti western music aficionado will love this one. Covers of R & B hero Lloyd Price and Chicago punk greats M.O.T.O., that will knock both your socks and pants off.



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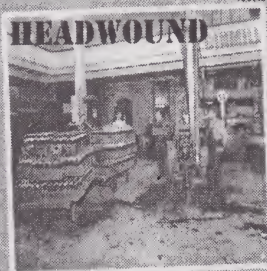
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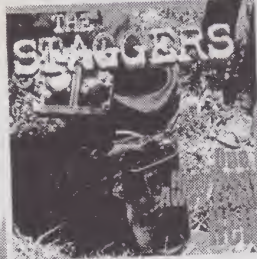
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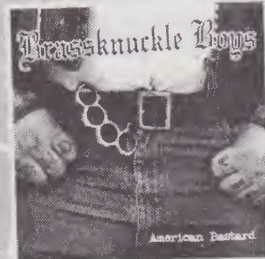
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Billy: No, 50 watts is 50 watts. It's just the way I play. 50 watts is too much any more because they mic stuff through the P.A.

Julia: How's your hearing?

Billy: Pardon me?

Julia: Why do you mess with DJ when you're playing?

Billy: Why do I? 'Cause he's the drummer. I can't mess with John and Exene that much, because, well, John has no sense of humor, [laughing] and Exene isn't playing an instrument, so she has too much freedom for retaliation. Besides that, X has always been me and DJ, to me. I just look at DJ and try to lock in with him. You can't ever hear the vocals onstage anyway. If the monitors are really good, you can tell when they're singing and when they're not, so if I can do that I can tell where we are in the song. Because John's always trying to put everything in his vocal performance, his bass playing is just all over the map and it's better if I can just tune him out. So, when we play live it's just me and DJ. I mess with him just 'cause he's there.

Julia: It's funny watching you two.

Billy: I mess with John, though.

Julia: Yeah, I've seen you pretend to turn knobs on his amp.

Billy: I pretend to twist his knobs then he can't figure out what I did and he goes crazy. With John, you have to be careful. There's a fine line you don't want to cross. You never know what mood he's in that night.

Julia: Looking back at all these years of playing music, what time period do you remember as being the best or the most fun?

Billy: Right now.

Julia: Now?

Billy: Probably, except I'm kinda old. Fun? [sigh] I don't know. Is it supposed to be fun?

Julia: Yeah, I hope so.

Billy: It's the struggle that keeps you going.

Julia: You have fun out there.

Billy: Onstage?

Julia: Yeah.

Billy: I try to make the most of it. I think the audience is fun.

Julia: In that Darby Crash book (*Lexicon Devil*)...

Billy: I haven't seen it.

Julia: Yeah, I should have brought it. It says Pat Smear punched you in the face?

Billy: Ha!

Julia: It says something about you wouldn't let him borrow your guitar after he broke his. I think this was at the Hong Kong or Madam Wong's.

Billy: Okay, we got a couple different incidents there. We played a gig at Hope St. Hall and the Germs were on. They tuned for about an hour, then Pat smashed his guitar. He sent somebody backstage to ask if he could borrow mine 'cause he just broke the neck off of his and I said "No." That was one incident, but I didn't even see Pat that night. There was a night at the Hong Kong. Darby was being a real asshole and trying to disrupt the show and I threw him off the stage... did you ever go to the Hong Kong?

Julia: As a kid going to Chinatown, but not to punk shows.

Billy: Well, you walked off the stage right into the kitchen. It looked like a door to the backstage, but it was just the kitchen and then you'd walk through the kitchen back to the outside. Anyway, I threw Darby off and Pat came through the door behind the drums, tried to reach over my amp and bitch slap the back of my head, but he missed and our roadie, Kit, grabbed him and threw him out of the club. That, somehow in Pat's story telling, evolved into him punching me out. If someone needs more validation than that... look, he claims he punched me out during an X show, in front of a sold-out crowd. Don't you think somebody would remember that? Just Pat remembers that.

Julia: You're really accessible. You're on the X (Yahoo) message board and email. Do you mind people emailing you? Asking questions?

Billy: No. Course not. I make it easy for them to find me. People are afraid of me for some reason. I try to be nice to people, but I don't know what they want. I don't know what they expect. People are afraid to hire me to play sessions. They're afraid to approach me about producing. I don't know. People are weird about me I don't know why.

Julia: Weird about asking you to produce, I think, because they think maybe you won't be into it and will say no.

Billy: Producing has gotten a bad name. People think producing is making it sound like Britney Spears.

Julia: ...or "He's not gonna like my band 'cause we don't sound like X, or..."

Billy: That's a good thing for me. I try to avoid bands that sound like X. I've already done that.

Julia: Anything else you wanna talk about?

Billy: Mmmmmmm gosh, we didn't talk much about British sports cars. When I was a kid, like junior high, the ultimate cool car you could have was an English sports car, like a MG or an Austin Healey or a Triumph or a Jaguar. We didn't want a '57 Chevy. We wanted a MG. '57 Chevy's got popular later. That's why Elvis is driving MGs in his movies.

Julia: Like James Bond?

Billy: In the movies, James Bond drives an Aston Martin, but the real James Bond, in the books, always drove Bentleys. Old Bentleys, like 1929.

Julia: You like movies?

Billy: I love movies.

Julia: Really?

Billy: I'm a movie buff, yes. Who's your favorite director?

Julia: The one guy. [It takes me a minute to come up with the name] Oliver Stone. I like the angles he films from.

Billy: I used to love Claude Lelouch 'cause he made this movie in the mid-seventies that I thought was the best movie I'd ever seen.

Julia: What movie?

Billy: *Toute Une Vie*, which is *And Now My Love* in English. I thought it was the most fantastic movie I'd ever seen. About a year ago it was released on DVD and a friend sent it to me. Not only is on DVD, but it's the director's cut. And it sucks!

Julia: Why?

Billy: Because it's got all this extra footage in it that should have been left out, and they re-did the subtitles. Actually, the new subtitles are closer to what they're really saying in French, but I don't like the dialogue as well. Now he's not my favorite director, but who ever edited that (the original) is my favorite editor. Do you like *Citizen Kane*?

Julia: I've never seen it.

Billy: I want to produce the musical equivalent of *Citizen Kane*. A record producer and a movie director are kinda the same job. I wanna do all the shadows and camera angles musically... and *Sunset Boulevard*.

Julia: [shrug "no"]

Billy: *Sunset Boulevard*?!

Julia: I can't sit through movies.

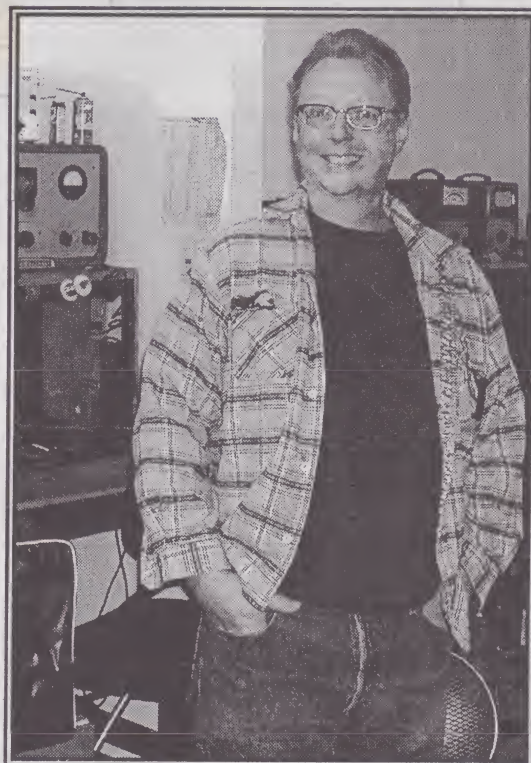
Billy: What?!

Julia: I can't sit still that long.

Billy: That how I feel about live shows, concerts.

(BZ got a phone call, I started taking photos and we never went back to the interview. I found out a few days ago the Billy Zoom Band is formed and playing shows starting June 2005. Also, an X live DVD will be released in April 2005 that Mr. Zoom mixed the live sound for.)

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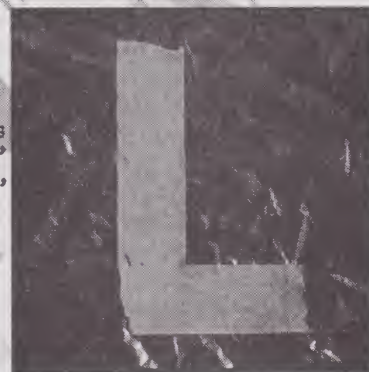
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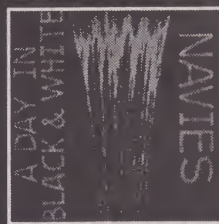
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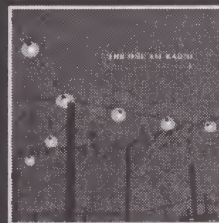


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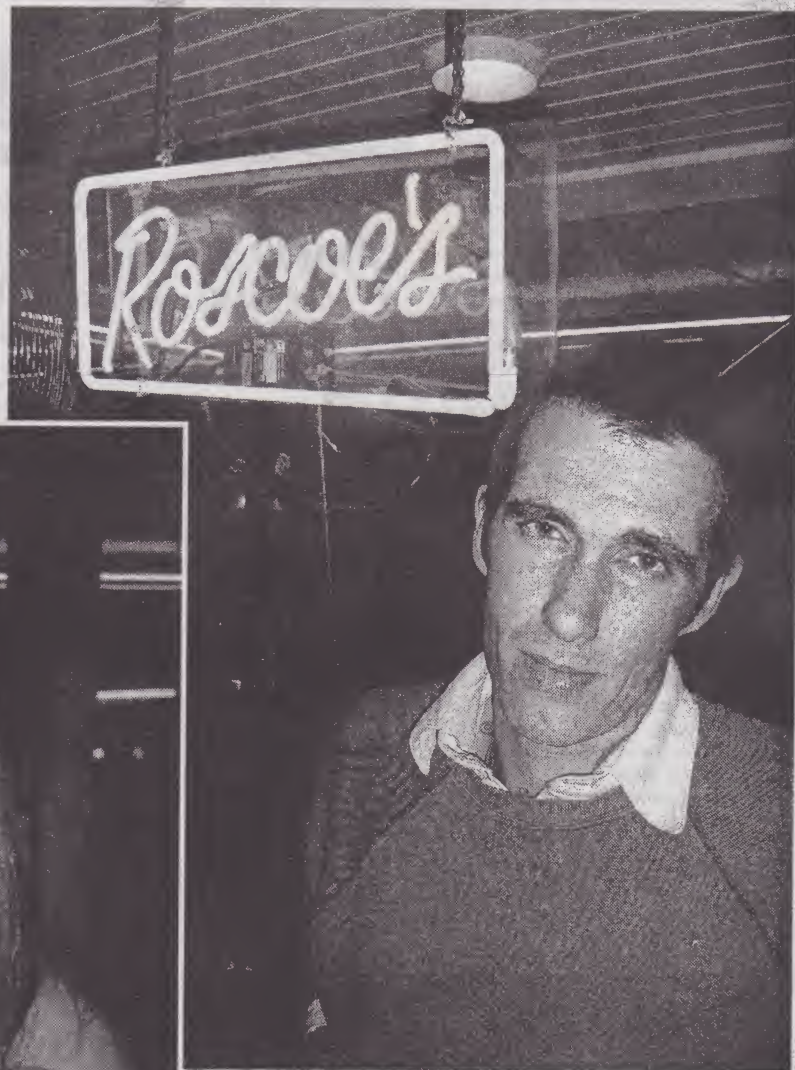
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*"No, Dude,
the one on Pico.
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**Hey Goober: Full
album art is
required for
review.
Pre releases go
into the trash.**

20 BELOWS, THE/

ZATOPEKS, THE: Split: 7"

The 20 Belows steal the show on this here seven-inchino from Europa! Three great pop punk tunes from this Danish three piece. Reminiscent of modern-day Queers, only higher-pitched vocals and European accents. I wonder if their name has anything to do with the Teen Idols song of the same name. I wouldn't doubt it. The Zatopeks side is good, but not as good of a recording as the first side and a little too much reverb on the vocals for my tastes. Good '50s-type guitars, melodies, breakdowns, and lyrics. Both bands thank Stardumb, and the Zatopeks just released a full length on Stardumb, if I'm not mistaken. This 7" is definitely for those who dig Stardumb releases. Definitely. —Mr. Z (All-Nite; www.all-nite-records.com)

25 SUAVE:

I Want It Loud: CD

It creeps me out when I see a picture of a band and one of the members has a severe receding hairline and wears their hair long. If you have ever seen a picture of the singer of the metal band Strapping Young Lad, you know what I mean. Well, the singer/guitarist is pictured in forehead glory. That is a hard sell, baby. It's not going to make the blind consumer yell out with devil horns in the air saying, "I'm buying this one! It's going to rock!" Ironically, this does rock in a later-period Corrosion of Conformity, a dash of Motörhead meets Gene Simmons, not Paul Stanley, singing for Kiss kind of way. Mid-tempo rock that is not annoying like the bad bar rock band at the country-western bar that has the cheap beer specials. —Donofthedeath (Bastard Sun)

7 SECONDS: Take It Back,

Take It On, Take It Over: CD

Listening to this takes me back to those breezy June skate-Betty days. The kind I had when I was a young teen and I'd sit on the curb, smoking cloves, watching my boyfriend ollie on his G&S. My favorite album was *Walk Together, Rock Together*. Old timers will enjoy the comfortable Kevin/Steve/Troy/Bobby lineup and tight new songs; newcomers can feel good knowing they're not a day late and a dollar short with this band. It's all in the family and they're just as good as they ever were. —Jessica T (Side One Dummy)



**I liked it in the old days when
people put their shit in toilets
and it stayed there.**

—Cuss Baxter

ADOLESCENTS: Complete Demos 1980-86: CD

Let me begin by saying that any self-proclaimed punker that has neither heard of nor owns a copy of the Adolescents' "blue" album should be immediately stripped of their official Johnny Rotten Pez dispensers and sent to perform gulag work for Britney Aguilera's street team. A harsh sentence, yes, but ignorance of the Adolescents' true greatness warrants just such a punishment. That said, let it further be known that any self-proclaimed punker who has heretofore procured a copy of the above-referenced "blue" album and fails to supplement it with a copy of this album will be due for a serious shin kicking, for this—a collection of demos (as the title implies) by the "classic" lineup of the band, before Casey went on to caviar-filled swimming pools and the 90210 zip code with DI, Rikk sold his soul to the devil to round out the classic lineups of both Christian Death and DI, Steve and Frank fell in love with Kat Arthur's snake and joined Legal Weapon, and Tony moved to the SGV and achieved punk-god status with stints in Abandoned, God's Riot and Flower Leperds—is surely no less mandatory for the collection. Of the sixteen tracks here, only three have ever been officially released ("The Liar" making its first appearance on Flipside's *Vinyl Fanzine Vol. 3*, "Who Is Who," and one of the two versions of "Wrecking Crew" included here appearing on BYO's *Someone Got Their Head Kicked In* comp), four are songs from their first demo that they never re-recorded, one is an outtake from the sessions that resulted in the *Welcome to Reality* EP (a markedly different version of "Richard Hung Himself," the song that would later

provide DI with their first "hit") and the remainder are alternate, yet damn fine, versions of songs that graced the "blue" album and its follow-up, *Brats in Battalions*. While some who believe that the glory days of punk died around the same time this band's classic lineup sputtered to a halt will find closure and much to wax nostalgic over, this also serves as a nice hors d'oeuvre to whet the appetite before they serve up that highly anticipated new album they've been threatening to unleash for the past couple of years for those of us impatient for new product from the reformed Adolescents. Quit torturing us, guys, and deliver some fresh goods already. —Jimmy Alvarado (Frontier)

ADOLF & THE PISS

ARTISTS: Lights Out: 7" EP
Well-executed but woefully pedestrian U.S. oi-punk. —Jimmy Alvarado (TKO)

AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY/ COMMON RIDER:

Split: CD

Back in the late '90s ska had its big revival (again). You couldn't go anywhere without hearing someone playing ska/punk, punk/ska or skacore or whatever. At the start, I thought it was fun. Later, it was excruciating. At that same time, Against All Authority was getting lumped in there. Sure, they had some ska riffs, but they were pure punk rock. They were among the only bands from that era that held any interest for me and I'm pleased to report that it hasn't changed. The tracks here rock. AAA isn't afraid to tell it like it is. In fact, they have no problem ripping your skull open to tell you. I think this is the best stuff I've ever heard from the band. One track sports the ska vibe, but, as usual, they do it better

than the glut of other bands that were doing it. Solid. The whole ska thing brings me back to Operation Ivy as well. I was never a fan. The only reason I have one of their records in my collection is because a friend of mine had two copies and he was right pissed off that I didn't have it. I don't hate it, but it sure as hell never worked me like it did for others. I've never bothered to listen to Common Rider until now just because I was never an Op Ivy fan. I would have to say that the songwriting has gotten better and having guys like Dan Lumley and Mass Giorgini in your band can only help. Yeah, I could see myself listening to this some more. Good split, but AAA are definitely the winners here. —Ty Stranglehold (Hopeless)

ANTISEEN / ELECTRIC

FRANKENSTEIN: Split: 7"

A venerated, age-old approach that we wily music critics like to use in reviewing "splits" like this, is to pit the two bands against one another in a sort of fictional brawl. And if there was ever a split that perfectly lends itself to the brawl motif, it's this one; two of the more bruising, brawling bands around, both sonically and physically speaking—brought head to head on none other than TKO Records. It's a natural. But this one turns out to be a bit of an upset, at least the way I score it. I expected the brutish hillfolk of Antiseen to rip open a can of whoop-ass with the few teeth they have left in their heads and tear the EF boys apart like hapless chickens in a geek pit. You see, over the past few years, I had started to think Electric Frankenstein had lost its electricity, so to speak; that they were a soft, pudgy, couch potato-y version of their former mighty self. Whoa, son, was I wrong. At least this time around. They come ripping out of their corner and bullwhip the mammoth hillbillies around the ring like cheap beanbags with ratty hair. All right, I'm exaggerating a little bit; it's not that much of a lopsided ass-beating. To be fair, the Antiseen song isn't bad at all. It chugs and growls in typical Antiseen fashion but it's just a bit sloppy and uninspired sounding, at least compared to the EF song. It fries my ass a bit that they'd go to all the bother of putting out a record with only two songs on it, especially with bands of the caliber of Antiseen and EF, but this one's worth dropping a couple bucks on regardless. —Aphid Peewit (TKO)

ANTISEEN: Dear Abby: 7"

When I pulled this out of the envelope, I groaned. Ugh. Antiseen. Rebel flags and songs about guns and possums and redneck stuff. Yuck. Fortunately, I'm really stoked about this. It's a really cool concept record; four songs about four of the baddest wrestlers ever (Abdullah the Butcher, Sabu, Terry Funk and Cactus Jack) and the clincher, the thing that made me jump up and down with excitement, was the ad for Abdullah the Butcher's House of Ribs and Chinese Food. It's real. It's a real restaurant; Abdullah the Butcher really

owns it. That officially makes it one of the coolest theme records ever. Good job, Antiseen! —Ben Snakepit (TKO)

ARMOR FOR SLEEP:

What to Do When

You Are Dead: CD

The art and layout on this CD rules. The little booklet that came with the CD (that sort of mimics little Bible-thumper pamphlets) explains the ever-so-witty guidelines on what to do when you are dead. A shame the music sucks. Or maybe to be fair, I should have said a shame this reviewer hates emo rock and the like. —Mr. Z (Equal Vision)

ARTHRITIC FOOT

SOLDIERS: Texas Idiot: CD

Oi-ish mid-tempo punk tunes covering Bush, Jehovah's Witnesses, "anorexic princess of pop," and skateboarding. Songs are pretty good for what they are, but the mix leaves them sounding a tad flat. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.afs.me.uk)

A-SIDES, THE:

Hello, Hello: CD

Here's another CD that finds its way to Razorcake HQ that is way off the base of its coverage. But to be fair, this is a real good interpretation of the Beatles' Sgt. Peppers meets a kind of Beach Boys Pet Sounds vibe. Music you can pass off to the grandparents. —Donofthedeat (Prison Jazz)

AUBURN BIKINI:

Self-titled: CD

There's immediately going to be limited regional appeal for a band with songs like "Punt, Bama, Punt," but luckily, I fall within their scope. Auburn Bikini kind of reminds me of the Big Boys in their happier moments; not as cohesive, but that general do-whatever-you-want sort of sound, plus the guy kind of sings like Biscuit. Probably a shitload of fun at a house party. Too bad putting out CDs doesn't help anybody win a national championship, huh? —Josh (Arkam, no address)

BALLAST: Sound Asleep: CD

I had seen this band from Montreal, Canada this past summer and was not too impressed. I felt that they were going through the motions. It was a tough night for them to be playing with Paintbox, Sunday Morning Einsteins, Artimus Pyle and Harto. I know bands have off nights and I believe they truly had one that night. So, I was glad that this showed up for review. Musically powerful and emotional at the same time, this band plays a dirge of despair. Having elements of crust and anarcho punk from the past, they developed a sound that seems genuine and heartfelt. Female-led vocals that, at times, waver in pitch, belt out lyrics that are intelligent and seem to touch her personally and expressed by her delivery. The music is top notch, using a variety of chords, breaks, and tempo changes so that each song is not a repeat of the previous. An effort was made to structure

the songs like stories. They may be a little long for some who are in the short-and-fast school of preference. Hearing this band in a studio situation gives me greater appreciation. —Donofthedeat (Profane Existence)

BASEBALL FURIES:

Let It Be: CD

Okay, I'll admit it: I don't get the name. Is it just some punk rock Dadaism that I shouldn't try to read too much into? Maybe it's all the news lately about baseball's "Roid-gate," but I keep picturing the chemically enhanced tantrums of millionaire ball players like Barry Bonds and Jose Canseco. Or Albert Belle when he tried to angrily squash some prank-playing kids like jack-o-lanterns under the wheels of his SUV one Halloween night several years back. Whatever. What matters, of course, is the music. And as the music goes, *Let it Be* continues on in the same blazing style of *Greater Than Ever*. Hard to put my finger on exactly what I hear here; at times I hear a sort modernized garagey Stones/Yardbirds hybrid—something akin to the Catheters, I suppose—and other times I hear a strong, gritty Dead Boys flavor. I even hear, every once in a while, a sort of less frenetic Henry Fiat's Open Sore, sans the spastic idiocy and the masks. If any of those comparisons are even remotely (excuse the pun) in the ballpark, then the Baseball Furies in are damn good company. A solid twenty-seven-and-a-half minutes of pop-you-in-your-mouth rawk. You really can't go wrong. —Aphid Peewit (Big Neck)

BBQ: Tie Your Noose: CD

About eight years ago, I said that BBQ—then dba Creepy of the Spaceshits—had the best sense of timing in rock 'n' roll, and you can dig out whatever moldy ol' issue of *MRR* I said it in and look it up yourself if you feel the urge for verification. I bring this up because, in the light of the BBQ project—Mark Sultan's left foot plays the snare drum, his right foot plays the kick drum, both hands play the guitar and his mouth makes the singing noises (I don't even wanna get into what appendage he uses to work the tambourine)—surely—surely!—my amazing RIGHTNESS in making that statement is now clearly evident. I mean, how the hell can the guy split all those actions up and assign them to different body parts like that??? I'd like to borrow his brain for the day, just to see how he processes information. So, I mean, as a feat of engineering, this album (recorded, of course, LIVE) is monumental. On the down side, unlike, say, Hasil Adkins or somebody, for whom the one-man-band-ness of the performance is crucial for the interpretation of the songs (I mean, how much less effective would Hasil's "Chicken Flop" have been if it was performed by a four-piece?), a fair amount of this material seems like merely a stunningly valiant approximation of what these songs are "supposed" to sound like (that is to say, were they performed by a "real" band, implying a presumably less limited beat selection, etc.), which

RAZORCAKE

Every time you buy a CD, a baby seal gets clubbed to death. And not in a good way.

THESE ARE THE TOP 7's SINCE THE LAST MAG.

Underground Medicine Mailorder, Connecticut

1. DC Snipers/Shop Fronts split (Your Permanent)
2. River City Tan Lines, Time to Get Right (Goodbye Boozy)
3. Beat Beat Beat, Cheap Time (Douchemaster)
4. Dutch Masters, Mississippi Helicopter Shark Attack (Goner)
5. Reatards, Monster Child (Zaxxon Virile Action)
6. Kajun SS, \$40 Quartet (Shattered)
7. Tyrades, On Your Video (SmartGuy)
8. Various Artists, Love Killed My Brain (Nasty Products)
9. Suspicious, We're All Wrong (Nerve Wracking)
10. Johnny Vomit & the Dry Heaves, Thanks for the Ride (Goner)

Colin from the Observers, who is very tall

1. Fucked Up, Dangerous Fumes
2. Gorilla Angreb, Astma (Kick N Punch)
3. Wolfgang Williams and the Punk Rock Faggots, demo tape (not a record)
4. Regulations, Destroy (Busted Heads)
5. Tyrades, I Am Homicide (Die Slaughterhaus)
6. Pedestrians, "I'm Not Sure of the Name but It's Fantastic"
7. Drunken Boat/Bent Outta Shape, split (Drunk Tank)
8. Straitjacket, Enemy (Jonny Cat)
9. Nice Boys, You Won't See Me Anymore (Discourage)
10. RTA, Walkin' Down the Street

Disgruntled Mailorder, California

1. Lipstick Pickups, Better Than You (Kapow)
2. Carbonas, Frothing at the Mouth (Douche Master)
3. Jeffrey Novak's One Man Band, Stranded (Yakisana)
4. DeLoreans, ...Are Your Girlfriend's Favorite Band (Sonico)
5. Gelsa Girls, Buckingham (Backflip)
6. The Rebel, Exciting New Venue for Soccer and Execution (SDZ)
7. Scarlign/Willowz, split (Sympathy for the Record Industry)
8. DC Sniper/Shop Fronts, split (Your Permanent)
9. Tractor Sex Fatality, Tiny Parts (Unscene Sounds)
10. Dirtbombs, Pray for Pills (Corduoy)

Against Forgetting: CD
Portland folk guy gone the way of New York, looks like. It's a bummer; I know a few kids who'd seen this guy at local watering holes back in the day, just him and his geetar, and to this day they still swear by him. So I was a bit disappointed by this album; I was hoping for something more akin to the emotive clang and sweat of early Against Me! or Rumbleseat. Instead, we've got thirteen songs of highly polished straight-up folk ballads, oftentimes with a full backing band. At times, the songs bear an uncanny resemblance to Pete Krebs, once Hazel crashed and burned. I mean, whether he's playing traditional Irish immigrant songs or tunes of his own lamenting the deaths of heroin-overdosed crusty punks in Portland, it's obvious that Neill's politics are earnest and heartfelt; I just wanted to hear a record laden with a bit more blood and a little less bazouki. —Keith Rosson (AK Press)

CASVERDE:

Looking God in the Eye: CD

A one man band, he does everything including the songwriting. Maybe it would have been vetted by someone else there with a crap detector on. Producer DJ Ice Cream Spooky Cup must have been too busy flagging down the Good Humor truck. Generic, uninspired pop with no crackle, no snap. "If You Know Me You'll Know" sounds like warmed over Matthew Sweet. "Talisman" is a song about not getting any action—maybe from playing to much D&D? You should be looking for warning signs when two song titles are borrowed from other artists (Morrissey and The Spencer Davis Group). Also, I would like to nominate the record company for most uninformative record company website of 2005. If you want good power pop from a one man band, check out Rich Creamy Paint's debut, but stay away from this record like the bubonic plague. —Sean Koepenick (Radioactive Bodega)

CHARMING SNAKES, THE:

Ammunition: CD

It took awhile to get my ear around the Charming Snakes, and here's my guess. Folks who really like(d) indie rock and pre-'95 alternative got sick of the drooling-into-a-shoe, preciousness that it'd morphed into (hello Shins! Viva Scared of Chaka!), circled back to its widespread roots. I hear, at times, Jesus and Mary Chain, Hüsker Dü, Love and Rockets, early Blues Explosion, Joy Division, Mudhoney, and Psychedelic Furs. I'll admit, I was eh on it for the first couple of spins. It took me a bit to get the lay of land. They've mapped out a jangley/raw force duality that works well. Their songs shimmer like pop gold, while being gray and gloomy as the inside of an empty refrigerator. Another way to put it is that *Ammunition's* got muscles and sticks the adjective "progressive" into many of punk's holes to satisfying result. The Charming Snakes reveal an odd-angled danceability that makes them spazzy-catchy, much like contemporary bands The Arm and Manikin. Plus, there aren't many modern bands that can have a sax-heavy, eight-minute track blend right in with the shorter, snappier numbers. I sure don't know how Ken Dintnap keeps on finding bands of this caliber, but bless him for it. —Todd (Dintnap)

CHEVREUIL:

Chateaufallon: CD

Hours and hours of complex monotony built layer on layer of repeated riffs in weird time signatures and no lyrics to make fun of, so I made some up: "A horse is a horse, or a mule or a donkey/My butt fell asleep; it rode the bus with Conky." —Cuss Baxter (Sickroom)

CHINESE TELEPHONES:

Self-titled: 7"

I know this doesn't mean much to more than twelve people, but this is the band that emerged from the ashes of

Hot Carl, who had a horrible name, but were full of potential, doing a good job of emerging from the shadow of liking Screeching Weasel too much. Fast-forward a couple years. The Chinese Telephones are even better. Add dashes of ripped-sweater, beer-stained early Replacements, the smart, rough pop punk propulsion of Rivethead, and letting it rip in a Milwaukee basement, hoping that you don't knock yourself on the ceiling from jumping around too much. It's great duct-tape, stained shirts, stinky pants, smart DIY punk. —Todd (Dingus)

CHIXDIGGIT!:

Pink Razors: CD

K.J.'s Pop Tarts and smoke voice, Chixdiggit's unquestionable pop hooks, and the band's Canadian stand-up comic routine are still strong as ever. I guess the never got the memo that pop punk bands were supposed to have all their best material in the first couple of years of existence, then resort to shit-talking and griping of their lack of recognition for at least a decade after. For personal born-in-a-thrift-store, living-in-band-t-shirt reasons, it's hard for me to sing along to songs that prevalently namedrop the Gap and J. Crew, but songs like "You're Pretty Good," and "Koo Stark" (although the sing along is a direct rip from the Briefs "New Shoes") fully redeem them. Tight, clean, non-embarrassing pop punk: what you've come to expect from Chixdiggit! year in, year out, and that's a lot easier said than done. —Todd (Fat)

CHROME PISTOLA:

Victimize Yourself: CDEP

Sup-par pseudo soul. Of the seven tracks on this, three are different from each other, with the remainder being instrumentals and alternate versions of those three songs, none of which were good enough to warrant so much attention. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.chromepistoila.com)

CIVET: *Massacre:* CD

This female foursome is going to have a hard time getting away from the Distillers references. There are a lot of vocal similarities. That was the first thing that popped in my head when I dropped this disc in the player. But other references popped in my head, like Elastica, L7, and Fuzzbox when I started to soak in the music. The music is your basic 4/4 with a snottiness that always makes things interesting. For four kids barely out of high school, they belt out a lot of attitude and spite. They fit in well in the Duane Peters' roster of bands. —Donofthedeat (Disaster)

COMMODOES, THE: *Cursed from the Beginning:* CD

Excuse me, Messrs Pop Punk Band Dudes. Allow me to introduce you to Mr. Garbage Heap. Mr. Heap, allow me to introduce you to one of the few things smellier than you. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.thecommodoes.com)

CREEPING NOBODIES, THE: *Stop Movement Stop Loss:* CD

Wrapped in a handsome and special package designed by one of Canada's most innovative design teams, Serigraphie Populaire, is a sometimes dreamy, sometimes cacophonous swirl of Sonic Youth, Dim Stars and peers thereof. Good, not salivatory, but I'll give them credit for putting the unlisted tracks in spots three and six rather than at the end. —Cuss Baxter (www.thecreepingnobodies.com)

CURSED: *Hell Comes Home b/w Search & Destroy:* 7"

The label on the record itself shows some Baphomet-type bearded Goat-Demon guy and this is pretty much the kind of music one would expect a deity like that to sit around and drink Blatz to on a Sunday morning while everyone else is at church. One new song and a balls-swinging version of the Stooges "Search & Destroy." For some reason, it makes me think of a cross between Fucked Up and Antiseen with nice crusty edges. This is music to mutilate cattle by. —Aphid Peewit (Hanging Hex)

DAMAGE CASE:

A Battalion of Bombers in a Chorus of Fire: CD

This runs pretty much along the same "fashion punk" lines as bands like The Virus and Total Chaos, although they are considerably more interesting and accomplished musically, especially lyrically, than those bands. A little too derivative for my tastes, but I didn't hate 'em or anything. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slab-O-Wax)

DASH RIP ROCK:

Recyclone: CD

Wait, wait, wait... *ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES* put out a *Dash Rip Rock* greatest hits album??? *ALTERNATIVE FRICKING TENTACLES??? DASH FRICKING RIP ROCK??? IIII'M LIVING IN A WORLD INSAAAAAAAAAANE!!!* (what's next, Bob Dylan cover albums???) ...actually, I have nothing against Dash Rip Rock (other than having heard "Bumfuck Egypt" one too many times back when I was a college radio DJ [and that, my friends, was in the '80s])—i'll cop to owning the *We Are Not of This Earth* CD and putting "Rattletrap" on more than one comp tape—it's just hard for me to make the spiritual connection between their twangy, vaguely-outside-the-lines, white-lightnin'-gulping party rock and the label that gave us, i dunno, LARD or whatever. I mean, they're a decent enough band (and *still together!*)—kind of an ancestor of somewhat more radio-friendly contemporary acts like Southern Culture on the Skids, but with a bit more Elvis Hitler (or, at bare minimum, Al Perry & The Cattle) in 'em—but i'm not sure how much this band would appeal to the average punk dork these days (especially when taking into account the fact that, tinkered

with or not, few things are aging less sonically gracefully than recordings from the '80s). However, if your idea of a good time is sneaking a bottle of Jack Daniels™ into the movies and taking a shot every time someone says "Winn-Dixie," you might have just found yourself a date. **BEST SONG:** "Rattletrap" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Shootin' Up Signs" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Back in the day, this band used to play at frickin' *Lefty's!* Now *that's* cred! —Rev. Nørb (Alternative Tentacles)

DAY AND AGE:

Via Moderna: CD

Emo gets a bad rap pretty consistently in *Razorcake* most of the time, and I can understand that. Day and Age, to their credit, are competent musicians; they also sound like they studied hard and got their degrees at Moss Icon University. To me, that particular band's influence is crisp and bright and obvious as hell here, right in your face: from the song structures to the lilting, off-key vocals, to the guitar meanderings and cryptic lyrics. Unfortunately, Day and Age lack what Moss Icon had in spades: the ability to draw you, the listener, in; to sonically grab you by the hand and then move that hand right to your throat and throttle you until you're just about ready to weep. We're talkin' *character development* here, guys. Conflict, rising action, climax, resolution. Moss Icon killed because they brought you in and then lovingly chopped you off at the knees. Day and Age just go right for the throat, and as a result it's not nearly as effective or moving. What we end up with is a record that's passable and decent, like a weird, low-key amalgamation of Modest Mouse and the Ladderback or something. They do have their moments, and it's a decent record. Unfortunately, I play decent emo records about as much as I play awful ones. Sorry. —Keith Rosson (North Park)

DEADMAN WALKING:

Can't Stop the Dying: CD

Laguna Hills, CA—death, "evil," bad OC hardcore punk, metal, and HP Lovecraft meets the *Penthouse* letters section. Get this thing off my stereo! That's all I need to say. —Miss Namella J. Kim (Living Dead Productions)

DELOREANS: *...Are Your Girlfriend's Favorite Band:* 7"

I had to call upon nearly all of my grit reserve to take this off the turntable. And that's *despite* the moderately pedantic Kiss cover that opens the B-side. The other two tunes show that they've got the goods, though, and their jester mentality makes me take them all the more seriously—rocking tunes and jokes! It's like having beer and deer jerky! —The Lord Kveldulfr (Sonico).

DIPLOMATS OF SOLID SOUND, THE: *Destination...*

Get Down!: CD

Iowa City is recanting the days of the lost art of instrumental dance music. If you've got a penchant for grooving and false eyelashes, step right up to this solid platter of sweet and soulful early '60s-inspired ditties. Immediately you notice the vibrating hum of vocalist (Can you call blurring out "Holdin' All the Money!!!") vocals? Fuck yeah!/organist, Nate "Count" Basinger's Hammond B3 (not B2) organ and the masterwork of Doug Robertson's jazz guitar gliding acrobatically across the thick and juicy steak-like bass lines supplied by Dustin Conner, although most of the bass you will hear on this record is provided by the organs (think Ray Manzarek). Drummer Jim Viner goes to work overtime by laying out a solid foundation of snazzy beats in the vein of Gene Krupa and Max Roach. Yeah, it's a winner. Slap a medal on this sophomore effort and put on your dancing shoes. Oh yeah, smoke a few silk cut cigarettes too while you're at it, baby. —Miss Namella J. Kim (Estrus)

DIRTY SOUTH APOCALYPSE/ ASTHMA ATTAQ: *Split:* LP

The Dirty South Apocalypse side comes out swingin': awesome spazzy hardcore with great vocals that remind me of Employer, Employee but with a raw, dirtier edge. You know how there are a few metalcore bands that started off good before they got lame? They kinda sound like one of those bands. But oh, the record's going all good and now the last song hits and it's this totally wimpy boring emo suckfest. What happened, guys? Asthma Attaq are really cool spacey hardcore with all kinds of cool, trippy parts that sound a bit like Tarantula Hawk or Yeti, and it even kinda sounds like Yes a little bit. It's really interesting and it held my attention throughout. This record is worth getting, for sure. —Ben Snakepit (Forever Escaping Boredom)

DIVEBOMB HONEY, THE: *Sex Effects:* 7"

The four songs on this record are quite delightful. The beginning of the first song, "Get Up," has a beat and melody that is strikingly familiar to Andrew W.K.'s "Party Hard." However, the song then goes into a more '80s aerobic-like song and reminded me of an '80s Jane Fonda workout video my mom had, with leg warmers and everything. When listening to this song you cannot help but bounce around and dance like Molly Ringwald, while strutting your most impressive aerobic steps. The music contains upbeat keyboards and an electroclash indie rock beat. The vocals are somewhat androgynous, but it is just singer Sheela and her low voice. The music is along the lines of the Epoxies and the Soviettes. The album is fun and worth a listen. It was also recorded on a four-track in the band's bedroom. Overall: enter-

taining and enjoyable. —Jennifer Moncayo (Jilted)

DIVEBOMB HONEY, THE: *Sex Effects:* 7"

Taking a step back, it's odd that the words "new wave" come up in 2005, especially when those words aren't preceded by "fuck." When it first came out, by and large it was the record companies' way of neutering punk and "safing it up" in an attempt to corral it and sell it to the masses. Don't get me wrong. There were some great songs, and a couple of great bands (Devo, Vapors), but it was such slim pickings, that who'd think that the torch would be re-lit to start new and interesting fires over twenty years down the line? For better and for worse, The Divebomb Honey sound a shit-ton like The Epoxies. Sure, there are differences. Sheela's voice has a lower register than Roxy Epoxy's and Ben Crew's backups are more hoarse than FM Static's, but the elements they're dealing with: keyboards up front, real drummer, fashion-forward sunglasses and stripes, guitar-driven new wave played by punk rockers is still in its pioneering stages, so I'm going to cut 'em a little slack. Besides, the songs—especially the songwriting in both bands—is top notch. Shit, you can dance to it and it's fun to listen to. —Todd (Jilted)

DMBQ: *The Essential Sounds of the Far East:* CD

Guitar Wolf meets Black Sabbath with a fistful of hallucinogens tossed into the salad. This record is dark and bluesy with hints of swamp rock malevolence and maintains the reckless abandon of an elephant—probably slower and more plodding than, say, a wild horse or a buffalo, but all the more destructive because of its sheer weight and volume. I could see smoking a lot of pot and enjoying this in even greater ways than what I do now. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Estrus)

DRIFTAGE:

Paint It Black: 7"

If you've never read the lyric sheet of a Japanese band that translates their lyrics into English, then you've missed gems like, "What reflected in the mirror are copy robots talking cheerfully in madness. I believe that I am an original and put my egoism on a nametag." That's poetry. I'm not being facetious. The words seem to make no sense, and maybe they don't make much, but think about it. Read that line a few times. It's crazy and perfect and takes you out of your normal train of thought. It's also a good reflection of Driftage's music: crazy and perfect and taking you out of your normal world. It's fast and sonic, thoughtful and a lot of fun. Without it, could we, "wander in our drift age"? —Sean (Snuffy Smile)

DROPKICK MURPHYS: *The Singles Collection Vol. 2:* CD

The thing that gets me about Dropkick Murphys is that I think that they are a

great band, yet find myself annoyed by them much of the time. The band is tight and the songwriting is solid, but I just have a hard time getting by the wishy-washy Irish shtick. I mean, I just can't handle it when a band is ripping it up only to stop and bust out the tin whistle and mandolin. It just kills the momentum. That said, this record is full of the type of Dropkick tunes that I love to hear. Balls-out, sing-along tunes that compliment multiple pints at the local shithole. Strong rockers with a good dose of covers of the likes of CCR, Gang Green, and Stiff Little Fingers make this record a worthy listen. Be warned that they do delve into the Irishism a bit here. I guess they kind of have to at this point but it's okay though because it's far outweighed by the good stuff. —Ty Stranglehold (Hellcat)

EARACHES, THE: *Get the Revolution Out of Your*

Head: CD

I really like the last album I heard from The Earaches, which is probably how this ended up in my review pile. I don't know what's happened since then. It seems like they may have locked themselves in a room where they could only listen to the Rolling Stones and The New York Dolls, and added that to their earlier sound. The result? Not something I'm too fond of. What before was raw and driving, now just seems to fit the mold of every other throw-back rock band around right now. Too bad. —Megan (Steel Cage)

ENEMY YOU:

Stories Never Told: CD

San Francisco four piece that cooks up a mean flame on this one—you can cook hotcakes on this baby! Enemy You take elements of some of my favorite bands like Bad Religion and Face to Face, chuck them in the old Bass-O-Matic and lets the scales fly. "East and West" is about some girl who's in real trouble. Things are so bad she's singing Journey lyrics into the mirror—ouch! "Something New" laments the lameness of the U.S. mass counter culture and how it's taken over everyone's lives. If Clear Channel weren't such a bunch of pussies they would play "72 Hours" on the radio because of the catchy chorus—"But some things never seem to change/I'm still the same old kid/I don't get paid/I don't get laid/And I don't really care." Classic. Trust me—you need this to blast in the car going ninety miles an hour down the freeway. Not that I am condoning breaking the law or anything. —Sean Koeppenick (Red Scare)

FALCON, THE: *God Don't Make No Trash up Your Ass with Broken Glass:* CDEP

I was actually about to buy this album when the fine folks at Razorcake sent it my way, and boy was I glad. This EP is pretty solid. Definitely for fans of Midwestern punk in the vein of Lawrence Arms (the singer of the Falcons is actually in the Lawrence Arms). This CD was a true DIY effort

in that the five great-sounding songs were recorded for free in various living rooms, band practice spaces, and the infamous Atlas Studios where bands like Alkaline Trio, East Arcadia, and Lawrence Arms have recorded past albums. Red Scare has had only two releases since its recent inception and so far it's a damn good track record of pop-infused punk. I can't wait to see what's next. —Mr. Z (Red Scare; www.redscare.net)

FASTLANE: *New Start:* CD

Another UK entry of melodicore for the Warped Tour set. If you put New Found Glory, Good Charlotte, or Simple Plan in your top-ten all-time list, this bubblegum will stick to the bottom of your shoe like no other. —Donofthedeat (Sucka Punch)

FEELERS, THE: *Learn to Hate the Feelers:* CD

Well, I can't say that I *hate* them, but I was definitely disappointed with this full-length. The split with the Blank Its was fantastic and I was really stoked to get this, but I have a feeling that there was a lot of weed involved in the writing process. The two songs on the seven-inch were driving, fast punk rock songs, and the songs on here are more like Devo. I like Devo, but I was expecting something on the level of the Baseball Furies or Sweet JAP, so it kind of threw me for a loop. The reverb on the vocals was pretty annoying, too. Why do bands keep doing that? For the most part, the guy sings kind of like Jay Reatard, with the occasional moment where it sounded like David Yow of The Jesus Lizard. It's growing on me but not at all what I expected. —Josh (Dead Beat)

FEVERS, THE:

Love Always Wins: CD

Signs that this record is not entirely On Its Shit are apparent from the get-go: Side One, Track One ("Dance") is a song about slow dancing, but it is not a number that can be slow danced to—which places it, of necessity, into the role of a sound-the-call-and-rally-the-troops-it's-dancin'-time type album kicker-offer, which is foolish, because a song about wanting to slow dance implies that the main character, who represents both the singer and the listener, wishes to stop *fast* dancing at his earliest convenience, so he can slow dance: As a fast dance number with a built-in deathwish, the song essentially neutralizes itself, and makes as little sense as starting L.A.M.F. off with "Going Steady" would have. The second song would have been an okay second song if the first song was really great, but, as the first song was *not* really great, as first songs should be, the second song is forced into a role of delayed *de facto* first song, which it does not succeed at. The third song, "Don't Tell Me It's Wrong," is a great third song, but third songs on albums like these are always a twinge more downbeat and wistful than the two which precede it, so now we've got an album that, for all practical purposes, skips the first two songs and comes in

on the slightly more melancholy third song. Okay, fine. Song four, "Bound to Cry," is an excellent fourth song; an uptempo potboiler if you will, but it is followed by the 6/8-time ballad "Lonesome Tears," which, at Side One, Track Five, is in the exact right spot for a 6/8-time ballad (if you believe in that sort of thing), yet it also unfortunately kills the late-developing momentum developed by the third and fourth songs. Side One ends with a cover of the Flamin' Groovies' "Let Me Rock" with new lyrics added by Fever B on account the original ones are unanimously unintelligible. I am neutral on this song because no one yells "oh, skooby-doo-oo!" at the end. The historically important Side Two, Track One spot (important because the first songs on each side of a vinyl record are the two most likely to be played by beleaguered DJs since they require much less time to cue up than other tracks) goes to the title track. I am kinda unimpressed with it. It sounds like one of those songs where the inconvenience of it being not-so-hot of a song blinds people to the fact that, it is, in fact, not-so-hot of a song. The record's fate is sealed: This is... *But the Little Girls Understand* to their first album's *Get the Knack*. Sandwiched between an okay Side Two, Track Two and a completely blah Side Two, Track Six, however, is the album's secret fizzy center: Three tracks of perfect bubblegum—a cover of the 1910 Fruitgum Company's "Get Your Luvin'," the "are-you-sure-Lancelot-Link-and-the-Evolution-Revolution-never-did-this" bittersweet kindergarten genius of "Photobooth," and "My Iy Iy," a song of such amazing gummi-perfection that I swore it was on some Buddah Records thing that I couldn't find until I contacted the band and found out that they wrote it in like 1997 or something (*he calls her at one; she's out having fun. He calls her at eight; she's out on a date.* How the guy managed to make it through the entire song without saying *I call you at six, you're out sucking dicks* is beyond me). By my count, the band goes about 5 or 6 for 12 here—disappointing but not devastatingly so. Dammit, *entropy* is what always actually wins. Ask around. **BEST SONG:** "My Iy Iy" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "My Iy Iy" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The "WHAT? WHALE" pseudo-record-label-insignia on the cover is a parody of White Whale Records, best known for being the Turtles' label. —Rev. Norb (Screaming Apple)

FLAMING STARS:

Named and Shamed: CD

Up front and not previously aware of the band, it's Gallon Drunk, the Gun Club and Lou Reed. Heavy on the Lou. Throw in some Joy Division and Nick Cave. Occasionally interspersing the inherently washed-out and dressed-up standard British moodiness is a dimly sparkling piano-bar piano, which sashays to the front of a rumbling Ennio Morricone-style bass. Smoky vocals tango with a Flamenco guitar. A twanging six-string twitches hesitantly as if it were a private Dick tailing a suspect into a dead-end alley. While the album is not quite that suspenseful, what you're listening to is still theoretically very Warhol-ish and painfully nouveau (think Velvet Underground). The band's musical reference to Gallon Drunk is empirical (lead Max Decharne drummed for them), but what really strikes me, above all else, is that Decharne's strong fascination with and invocation of Lou Reed rivals, if not supercedes, Morrissey's idolism of James Dean. —Jessica T (Alternative Tentacles)

FLOORIAN: What the Buzzing: CD

It's a tedious session of hearing tests and musical bowls. I just can't do the spaced-out intergalactic ethereal reverb thing. I didn't even like this kind of music when I used to do hallucinogens. If you want a detailed and dead-on description, find Roger Moser Jr.'s review of this very same CD (try Bomp.com). It's a perfect description of this album

that *no one* could have written better. Damnit, what is that buzzing (*swat, swat*)? —Jessica T (Bomp)

FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC:

Self-titled: 12" EP

This started off so good, real chaotic screamy hardcore in the vein of Page 99 or Orchid. Their hearts were in the right place, and they got the right kinda artwork, layout, and format (12" 45rpm on white vinyl with no label art so you gotta read the matrix etching to figure it out). At first I thought it was lame that they put out a one-sided record, but honestly, one side is really all they need. By the end of the record, I was tired of it and glad it was over. This isn't a terrible record, it just seems like nobody involved was trying very hard. —Ben Snakepit (McCarthyism.org)

FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES:

Self-titled: tape

The return address on this envelope said, "Andy Peterson's Arme." Come on, that's pretty fucking rad! As for the music, uh... I can't really hear it. It sounds like it might be good, abrasive, skateable, early '80s hardcore if they record it better. I mean, I don't usually bag on production values, but holy shit, the bass drum sounds like a pan of Jiffy Pop and it's louder than all the other instruments combined. It sounds worse than the Mummies stuff where they just set down a tape recorder in the middle of their practice space. But in the picture, one of them is wearing a Jerry's Kids shirt, so you've got to give them credit for that. —Josh (Formaldehyde Junkies)

FOUR LETTER WORD:

Like Moths to a Flame: CD

There's a *Suburban Voice* compilation that has something like thirty-one straight-ahead hardcore songs and one Four Letter Word song. It's unmistakable when the Four Letter Word song comes on. You can understand every word Welly sings in the beginning. And, yeah, he sings, and pretty well, which I guess would be your first hint that we're moving out of straight-ahead hardcore. So you'd think that Four Letter Word would stand out like shit in a punch bowl on that comp, but they don't. There's such a hardcore attitude to their songs that it transcends narrow genres. And that's the best way to view Four Letter Word: a hardcore heart wrapped up in the skin of mid-tempo, melodic songs with strong vocals. *Like Moths to a Flame* is their latest offering. The lyrics are political, very left-leaning and a throwback to *Not So Quiet on the Western Front*-era punk. The songs make you want to sing along. For those of us who miss bands like Los Olvidados and The Effigies, we could do worse than this new Four Letter Word album. Frankie Stubbs recorded it, too, so you know it sounds good. —Sean (Newest Industry)

FRENCH TOAST: In a Cave: CD

Rrrrrr, I really hate the fact that I'm not impressed any more by new Dischord releases. Is it just me? Have I actually maintained such a juvenile sensibility that I can't handle underground music that strays into the realm of the arty and experimental? I mean, there's nothing wrong with this record or this band (a duo comprised of former members of Fidelity Jones, Make Up, and Nation of Ulysses), but dammitall, I started finding Dischord bands to be a bit dull even a dozen years ago, and this record continues that tradition. There are certainly some interesting moments, but for the most part I didn't notice the record when it was playing. Perhaps I'm just not cut out to appreciate such stuff, but that's not my fault—even though I can discern and appreciate a good wine, I still prefer Blatz because it takes a lot less effort to appreciate and get me drunk. [note: reviewer assumes full responsibility


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for the pointlessness of this review] —The Lord Kveldulfr (Dischord)

FUCKED UP: Generation: 7"

Once again, these cantankerous Canucks have managed to put together a record of such mammoth left that you'd swear it was raining Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox's body parts outside and, once again, it's nothing short of awesome. And, like their previous recordings, this one seems to have that same almost otherworldly effortless quality to it. Add to that the fact that they're whip-smart and that they drop references to things like chaos magic and Gilles de Rais in interviews and claim a kinship with the Vienna Actionists and the Situationist International. Cool stuff. But even if your MTV-trained attention span won't allow you to appreciate all the esoterica, you can always just tune in to the simple somatic joy of turning the volume up and letting FU blow the blubber off your body. I'm only going to say this once: this band had better not break up; there is some wicked, fecund chemistry at work here. —Aphid Peewit (Slasher)

FUX, THE: I'm on TV: CD

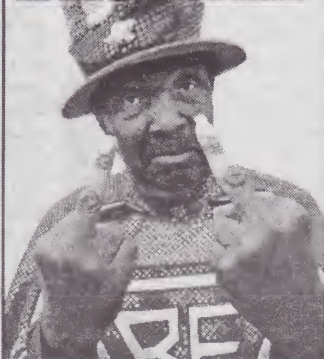
Just who are The Fux? One song ("Deathmobile") sounds *exactly* like the Mentors; I trust that they'll take that as a compliment, because they do a magnificent job of calling up the bloated spirit of El Duce. But wait! Another song ("Walk Away") sounds just like The Dead Milkmen—that dorky, lyrically rambling type of song that tells a semi-pointless story. As with the homage to El Duce, they do an admirable job of calling on the spirit of the Milkmen, but that band always struck me as too dorky and semi-pointless for my tastes, so I like to skip over this song a lot. The rest of the record sounds a lot like Fang... but better because while the maturity level is about the same, **RAZORCAKE 83**

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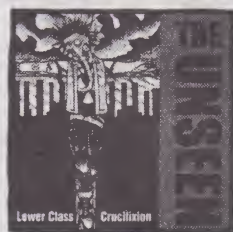
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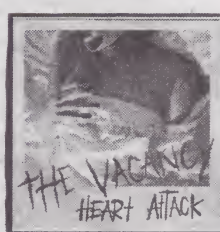
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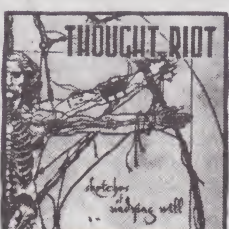
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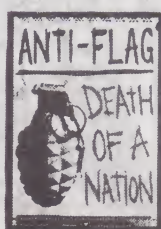
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Watch for big things from A-F Records including a new website featuring an audio store filled with rare and exclusive mp3s, and some exciting new releases.

these guys at least have a true sense of humor about themselves. Aside from doffing the cap to past legends while carving out their own way, what I found made this record acceptable was the total lack of effort on the part of the Fux to take themselves too seriously (the real klunkers on this record seem to be efforts at being too serious). They should do a Mentors tribute, though... -The Lord Kveldulfr (Valiant Death)

GAY COWBOYS IN BONDAGE: The Complete Silly Discography (1983-84): CD

I remember first seeing this band's name on the *Flipside Vinyl Fanzine Vol. 1* LP and thinking to myself, "That is a pretty funny name. They probably get a lot of shit for that." Listening to the song "Domestic Battlefield" that is the first track here and was on the comp, brings back memories of an undefined scene. A punk band was a punk band and the scene was new, not segregated in sub-genres and it was exciting hearing about bands from other cities or countries. It was also easier being a goofball of a band without so many people getting uptight about it. I never did get any of this band's output, which basically from what I can find, is a demo and a 7". But being graciously chosen by Sir Bob Suren of Sound Idea/Burrito Records fame to be sent a review copy made me one happy camper! It's got thirty-four tracks which include the infamous demo, 7" and live tracks to round things out. You can tell in their songs that they were out for a good time and nerds and outcasts knew how to have fun. This is not just for the old guys so they can listen and cry into their beer mugs. If you enjoy the silliness of the Dickies or the Descendents, this should be right up your alley. Order them direct because Bob is selling them on the cheap! Six bucks is one hell a deal! -Donofthedeath (Burrito)

GIANT HAYSTACKS:

Blunt Instrument: LP

As much as I love this band, I was still surprised at how much I liked this album. It's less frantic than the first one, *We Are Being Observed*, but that doesn't detract from the music. Where the early stuff just ran for the finish line, *Blunt Instrument* takes its time and fleshes out some really great melodies, and also eliminates most of the Minutemen comparisons. There's a Jam-like ring to the guitar, and it's almost poppy. And they write great lyrics, to boot. It's self-released with hand-screened LP covers. Best record I've heard so far this year. -Josh (\$10 ppd., Mistake)

GITOGITO HUSTLER:

Gito Gito Galore: CDEP

There's just something about punk rock played by Japanese girls. It's got a certain chaos and beauty that you just can't find anywhere else. Gitogito Hustler demonstrates this well. They have some heavy guitar riffs, not

unlike their countrymen, Thee Michelle Gun Elephant. There's a sweet, explosive energy to all the songs, like their countrywomen The 5.6.7.8.s. And, as Rev. Nørb very well may say prior to fouling the CD insert, it all comes in a tight little package. A worthwhile EP here. -Sean (Gearhead)

GLASS & ASHES:

Aesthetic Arrest: 7"

High energy, chaotic punk rock from the town where I live. Fuck yeah. Who would've thought? *Aesthetic Arrest* is the first (or at least that I know of) album by Ventura's own Glass & Ashes. And though I've never seen them live, listening to them through the speakers of my stereo makes me feel like I'm in a packed, sweaty warehouse space, and the P.A. is about to blow out, and the walls are ringing, and I'm surrounded by kids with Rites of Spring and Black Flag t-shirts, and they're screaming along to every word even though I have no idea what the singer's going on about. This album just has that intensity. It's like the band might unravel at any moment, but they manage to barely hold everything together. It's good stuff. -Sean (No Idea)

GORCH FOCK:

Lying and Manipulating: CD

Imagine the Cows with more art and less punk thuggery. Interesting, if not quite mandatory. -Jimmy Alvarado (Australian Cattle God)

GREYSKULL/

BAFABEGIYA: Split: 7"

Greyskull reminds me of a less amusing Final Conflict. Bafabegiya's lyrics, chemistry, guitars, and brand of hardcore in general, is far better than their vinyl-mates. So good in fact, you want to (and can) sing along if so inclined. -Mr. Z (Spacement)

GUNMETAL GREY:

Solitude: CD

Throaty, growling screams, chugga-chugga guitar solo, bridge, melodic vocals. One guy's wearing a sweatband on his arm, so you know they're serious. This couldn't be good even if they did something original with it. -Megan (Indianola)

HAMMERDOWN

TURPENTINE:

Ain't No Grave: CD

Starts off with some matter of heaving, fiddle-augmented grunge gospel number with vocal breaks that sound like Tenpole Tudor gone preacher-man. Becomes swiftly more banjo-flavored thereafter. BEST SONG: "Ain't No Grave" BEST SONG TITLE: "Fare Ye Well" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Band contains member called "Jif Johnson" -Rev. Nørb (Blue Bus)

HANNAH HIRSCH:

Fireworks in the Daylight: 7"

When a band says they listen to "a lot of Blondie and Discharge," one feels

the need to pay attention. What they've concocted from those influences is pleasant enough pop with loud guitars and a few minor chords. Not bad, but kinda expected a bit more. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.hannahirsch.com)

HARD SKIN: Same Meat

Different Gravy: CD

Oi, oi, oi! Why is it that joke bands are always the best at playing the style that they're trying to ape? Hard Skin may be taking the piss, but they can sure play it good. When the disc started playing, I lost control over my motor skills and my body got up and got a beer from the fridge. If I hadn't regained consciousness I might have shaved my head! I'm sure that there are jokes aplenty in the lyrics, but I swear the only words I can make out are "Oi," "bollocks," "cunt," "pint," and "arse." In the meantime, I'll just keep drinking to see if it becomes any clearer to me. -Ty Stranglehold (TKO)

HARRY BALZAGNA & THE TEENIE WEENIES:

Self-titled: 10"

From a graphic design/art standpoint, the record's sweet. It's worth the ten bucks for wall decoration. One side is blank and it has a two-color screen. The other side has yet another two-color design screened under the clear wax. It's stunning and shows, yet again, that vinyl has possibilities that have yet to be fully explored. The band, well, they're fair to sucky. The first two songs sorta sound like JFA, just not nearly as good. The last track, "Front Side Grind," attempts to go the Saccharine Trust, Flipper art-damaged route, and I guess they succeed in making something that's truly hard to listen to, but instead of being challenging, I just found it irritating. It's the audio equivalent to walking in on your uncle masturbating and you're forced to watch for five minutes until he's done. So—back to the beginning of the review—I've just decided that I'm going to get some fishing line and hang the record up like a mobile. It's not coming close to the player ever again. -Todd (\$10, ppd., Snack Attack)

HEAVY TRASH:

Self-titled: CD

It's Jon Spencer and a guy from Speedball Baby, and I'm sure it's the mildest Jon Spencer I've ever heard, though occasionally quite nice in spite of too much reverb, twang, and pedal steel. Purchasers of non-promo copies might be interested to know that the focus tracks are #5, 8, 3 and 2, though #3 sports the word "shit," so don't play it on the radio. -Cuss Baxter (Yep Roc)

HIGH TENSION WIRES:

Send a Message: CD

Life's full of "what ifs?" that you don't think would come true, that you just toy with to make your day seem better. World peace through the bet-

terment of music type shit, like what if Mike Wiebe of the Riverboat Gamblers fronted most of the Marked Men (Mark and Jeff) to be a super-group? (And most supergroups aren't that super: Damn Yankees? Travelling Wilburys? Very not so good.) The High Tension Wires, goodwill ambassadors to music lovers worldwide, fulfill one of my musical fantasies. The result? Sonic butter that melts down to a barbed wire center via the microwave-intense scene of Denton, Texas. Take the Undertones, The Buzzcocks, and The Jam (with those little, simple flourishes that break a song wide open while your fingers snap), put them in a hostile environment (a couple decades of Skoal-stained teeth threats and suburbs that were designed for suffocation of any sort of difference), light a couple of Scared of Chaka bottlerockets into the mix, steal the hubcaps, blow a radiator hose driving through Tucson, and there you go: ten songs, a little over eighteen glorious minutes, no fuckin' around. -Todd (Dirtnap)

HOLLOW GROUND:

Cold Reality: CDEP

Call me old-fashioned, but I like my hardcore without growly metal vocals. Come to think of it, when did hardcore become metal? Guitar: CHUGGA CHUGGA CHUGGA Vocals: GRRRRRRRRRR!!!!!! Me: YAWN! I think that the "cold reality" that these guys should be screaming about is that they are from Winnipeg, which is regarded as pretty much the coldest city in Canada. "GRRRRRRRRR! FROSTBITE! SNOT FREEZING IN MY NOSE!" It all makes sense now. -Ty Stranglehold (Organized Crime)

HOLLOW POINTS, THE:

The Black Spot: CD

Delivering on the promise of their *Dirtnap Across the Northwest* appearance and their first EP, the Hollow Points serve up angry, tuneful and—dare I say—political punk rock that comes on like a locomotive and doesn't let up. The lyrics, while usually quite direct, opt for a decidedly meatier poetic flair than "Bush is a fuckin' asshole" and address more subjects than America's global transgressions, although a number of songs here address just that. Musically, this comes on like gangbusters, sorta like the mid-point between the Adolescents, NOFX, and Bad Religion, with loud guitars that manage to "chugga-chugga" without sounding overtly metal, a driving rhythm section, and a few surprises up their sleeves (mandolins!?) to keep you on yer toes. At a time when American culture is being attacked from within by the very people charged to protect it, it's nice to hear a band outside of the black-clad and crusty crowd that understands that punk is supposed to stand in direct opposition to the powers that be and has enough righteous anger to come off as sincere when they do so. These new-jacks remain one of my favorite

bands currently making the rounds.
—Jimmy Alvarado (Disaster)

HOMBRINUS DUDES / LOADED FOR BEAR:

Split: CD in a DVD case

Four songs by each cookie monster band. Sounds accomplished... tight... not new but probably rad live at the big gorefest. —Speedway Randy (Blood Money)

HORACE PINKER:

Texas One Ten: CD

Sigh. I really wanted to like this. Horace Pinker has been around for a long time, always keeping it real, helping out other bands coming through their town, a real nice bunch of guys, seriously. But this record is just bad. I hate to say it but it's true. Ultra-sugary, slick-produced pop-emo that would probably appeal to fans of the Weakerthans or something. I just can't get into it. I know that these dudes are totally old school and legit, but sometimes that just ain't enough. —Ben Snakepit (Thick)

I OBJECT!:

The First Two Years: CD

Energetic, super-earnest, female-fronted thrash with their hearts in the right places. The gal's voice kind of reminds me of the Triggers in some spots, and the music behind the voice reminds me of Asshole Parade, who I really like. Actually, it's a little more punky and way more sober than Asshole Parade.

Named after the Suburban Mutilation song? —Josh (Punks Before Profits/ Unholy Resurrection/ Town Clock)

INNOCENTS, THE: 1,000

Years, Courageous b/w

Luvlord: 7"

Take the Reatards, Billy Childish, a pocketful of dirt thrown in the air and choked on, polyps on vocal chords, static, feedback, no bass, all played in a house that's about to collapse, and that's what the Innocents are going for. It's lo-fi, shows flashes of much greater competence beneath the rubble, yet the din fits 'em perfectly like a stained, decade-old denim jacket frayed at all the edges with the elbows blown out. —Todd (Jonny Cat)

INSPECT HER GADGET:

Look Harder: CDEP

Oakland, CA all-lady four-piece bring the rock on this seven-song release. "Falling Down" is a full-tilt rocker with some nice bass lines courtesy of new bassist Jen Kamps. "Breaking News" has some nice cowbell that Will Ferrell would be proud of. "Almost Amazing" sounds like the radio-friendly track here, but it's polished without being overbearing. "Holding On" sounds like Mary's Danish with more distortion thrown in for good measure. The best tune on here is "Schizo" which rocks with reckless abandon. I could have done with a little less air-brushing on the back cover, but that's just me. Inspect Her Gadget are the best all female out-

fit to blast into overdrive since... you thought I was going to say The Donnas? Please. The Pandoras, of course! If they keep rocking, I'll keep looking harder. Yummy. —Sean Koepenick (Self-released)

INTERNATIONAL BUSI-

NESSMEN: The Formula: CD

I'm assuming I got the band name and album title right, 'cause at first glance it looks the other way around, but I did bother to look a little closer. Anyway, yuck. This band sounds like the theme music for *The OC*, or like a featured Myspace band. Lame, commercial-sounding white people music. Whining about girls and the end of summer and all that crap. I bet these dudes have fauxhawks. I'm trying, honestly, but I can't think of anything good to say about this. I'd rather go to the dentist than have to hear this again. —Ben Snakepit (Rumble Gulley, no address given)

INTERNATIONAL PLAY- BOYS, THE: Sexiful: CD

Deep-fried swamp rock from this five piece. Shades of Alice Cooper and The MC5 updated for the masses. You would have a hard time going wrong with song titles like "Stage IV Sex Master" which actually features fake sex sounds! "If I Was Your Woman" feels like a lost Neil Diamond song—if Neil met Buck Dharma at an Italian restaurant. That's 'cause there's some sweet double-track lead guitar lines throughout. "Screaming Japanese

Gasm" and "Voodoo Chicken" push the velocity on *Sexiful* into the red. The inner picture is pretty humorous too. Lead singer Monty Carlo looks like the long lost cousin of Pete from The Hives. Apparently he also has a broken foot. From too much rocking? I would have to think so. —Sean Koepenick (Morton)

JEFF DAHL: Cursed,

Poisoned, Condemned: CD

Another year, another jaw-dropping Jeff Dahl record! This man is so prolific that I can't believe it. At last count, I had over twenty full-length releases by Dahl and I don't even have everything. The thing I love is the way he can distill fifty years worth of rock-'n'roll into such an amazing blend. There is a heaping helping of glam, punk, '60s garage, '50s rock-'n'roll, and even blues to be had on this release and he pulls off all styles with class to spare. Some of my favorites over the years have been the ballads and bluesy songs. There is a great one here with "Wicked Trail of Sin." A couple of his best ever straight-ahead rockers here as well, with "Cock O the Walk" and the great "SXSW Whore" being the standouts. This record is rock solid from start to finish, just like always. Getting better like a fine wine, motherfucker! —Mike Frame (Steel Cage)

JEFF DAHL: Cursed,

Poisoned, Condemned: CD

Gotta love Jeff's tenacity—he's been

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mining the same plot of rock'n'roll real estate since the days when Powertrip stomped terra and, while his work might not be the most incendiary of punk's acolytes, he does make a mighty fine racket. This is no exception, with some good tuneage that grooves along quite nicely without sounding like more Thunders/Dolls rehash. —Jimmy Alvarado (Steel Cage)

JEUNESSE APIATRIDE:

La Victoire Sommeille: CD

French-Canadian sung street punk out of Montreal with female-led vocals backed by the female bass player make for great harmonies. Thank their underpants for the English translations because I would have been a lost camper. They seem to be on the anarcho vibe with song titles like "Stateless Youth," "To My Revolution," and "Unity, Struggle, and Victory." The lyrics are well thought out and voice a strong opinion. I wish the lyrics were backed with a heavier and faster sound of crust. I think it would have brought the anger more to the point. Not that this is bad. This is better than ninety-five percent of the street punk out there. —Donofthedeat (Fire and Flames)

JOHN SCHOOLEY AND HIS ONE MAN BAND:

Self-titled: CD

Perfect flawless synthesis of the gleeful lawlessness of Hasil Adkins, the frantic stomp of Doo Rag/Bob Log III and the gut-wrenching power of the Immortal Lee County Killers. Highest recommendation. —Cuss Baxter (Voodoo Rhythm)

JUKEBOX ZEROS:

Welcome to Rutsville: CD

Just because they're a really good Dolls/Stones-inspired rock band doesn't detract from the fact that they are YET ANOTHER Dolls/Stones-inspired rock band. They've got some great songs, but sweet Jesus, not every band that was around in 1977 sounded like this. —Jimmy Alvarado (Steel Cage)

KADDISFLY: *Buy Our Intention; We'll Buy You a Unicorn: CD*

My husband put this CD in and our conversation went along the lines of... **Me:** What are you listening to? **Hubby:** The new release off Hopeless. **Me:** Ugh, I should have figured. **Hubby:** Maybe your little brother would like this. **Me:** Yeah, probably. (As a side note, my youngest brother is fourteen and in the eighth grade. We normally don't give him crap music to listen to, as he is still easily influenced, but we thought we'd humor his current taste in emo/indie rock à la MTV. Really, he's a good kid. Just a bit musically confused, as many of us were at that age.) —Heela (Hopeless)

KAJUN SS: *\$40 Quartet: 7"*

My expectations were too high coming from members of The Persuaders, but this deepsouthernpunkrock gives you what you need in guitar and demolished tin-shed vocals. If it was playing from the window of a passing ¾ ton pickup, I would turn and look for sure. —Speedway Randy (www.geocities.com/shatteredrecs)

KEVIN K: *Mr. Bones: CD*

Kevin K has been putting out records for so long that I don't even remember how long he's been putting out records for; however, carbon dating suggests that this gentleman learned how to play guitar in the early-to-mid '70s and learned how to write songs in the late '70s and early '80s. Punk rock played by one who rocked prior to its invention! *And a drum machine with a name!* Surely our culture is a great and mighty one. **BEST SONG:** "Up to My Neck" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Cherry Vanilla," although I like regular vanilla better. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** This gentleman enjoys wearing items adorned with skull motifs. —Rev. Nørb (RealKat, kevin.k.realkoolkats.free.fr)

KILLERS, THE:

Self-titled: 7" EP

Judging from the level of thrashy noise coming from this, I think it's a safe assumption that this is not the band enjoying mucho airplay on America's alt-rock stations. Be cool as fuck if it was, though. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hater of God)

KRUNCHIES, THE:

In De Winkel: LP

The Krunchies are smack dab in the strangulated universe also inhabited by The Tyrades and The Orphans, where guitars buzz like saws in retards' hands and limbs are plopping off, where drums sound like mines going off, where people sound like they're hurting, and sentiments of failure are thickly painted with rollers (i.e. "Reaffirming My Hatred of Humanity through Failed Relationships"). What's not to like? Get dirty and scream along. —Todd (Criminal I.Q.)

LAGWAGON:

Live in a Dive: CD

Here is a band on Fat that I have liked a song here and there for years but would not call myself a fan. So I find it hard to review this because I really don't particularly enjoy this band at the moment. What I can comment on is that for a live recording, they really do a great job on the production of them. This series surpasses a lot of live recordings that I have heard through the years. I cringe when I have to listen to a live recording. Something always sounds bad on one of those. It's really hard to translate what it feels and sounds like to actually be there. But this series is an example of how a band should be recorded live. Not everybody has the budget to do it this way, but this

sounds better than a lot of bands' studio recordings. See what you get when you pay attention to the quality? The real Lagwagon fans will eat this up. So why do I have to sell this with my shitty opinion? —Donofthedeat (Fat)

LAMPS, THE:

Self-titled: LP

The first time I listened to this album, I didn't like it because I couldn't stand the guy's voice. At all. It sounds really blown out, almost like the first Unwound album but up front in the mix and with reverb on it. Then I listened to the album again really loud and I liked it. The music is really fucked up and noisy, like a lot of stuff that In the Red puts out, to the point where I could just tune out the vocals. And then the more I listen to the album, the more the vocals seem to fit and I actually like the whole damn thing. Love it when that happens. —Josh (In the Red)

LAST OF THE JUANITAS:

In the Dirt: CD

The after-effects of a frontal lobotomy performed on White Zombie playing dissonant dirge for the audience of one. —Donofthedeat (Wantage)

LAST RESORT, THE:

Resurrection: CD

With this, Last Resort wins the trophy for "old oi band that manages to still sound like an oi band." This sounds like it could've easily come out in 1981, and that's actually a good thing 'cause everything here is rife with requisite anger and rage, a crucial ingredient to this strain of oi that so many contemporary bands lack. Four new tunes start things off, followed by some reworkings of older tunes like "Violence on Our Minds" as well as some 4-Skins, Warzone, and Agnostic Front covers. All in all, a worthwhile listen, although more new original material would've been nice. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

LEGENDARY SHACK

SHAKERS: Believe: CD

God damn. This makes me want to fuck. It's that good. Toss some drinks down my throat, drag my wasted ass out to the old sedan on a sticky summer night, toss me in the back seat and... Tight, rumbling slap bass; quivering, affected vocals ranting like a fevered sinner; rabid fiddle; driving, harsh drumming; inebriated accordion, banjo and other assorted days-of-yore accoutrements. Incorporating such seemingly far-flung visions as gypsy wagons and tent revivals to their base of boogie-woogie, R&B, hillbilly, country, western swing, punk, and rockabilly, the LSS is a steam-powered locomotive running full-bore on a downhill grade. Thanks to Yep Roc for reminding me that no shit comes out of Chapel Hill, Bethlehem of the Atlantic. —Jessica T (Yep Roc)

LOTTIE COLLINS, THE:

Good Night for the Lottie Collins Funclub: CD

Fun, happy, shit-simple Japanese garage pop in the vein of... well, other fun, happy, shit-simple Japanese garage pop bands. It's really sloppy and poorly recorded, but this kind of stuff usually gets by on charm anyway, and the Lottie Collins have plenty of that. And I hear they wear matching outfits! —Josh (www.icnet.ne.jp/~collins)

LOVED ONES, THE:

Self-titled: CDEP

Pop isn't supposed to take itself seriously. When it does, it's not fun anymore. This band kind of reminds me of something like Alkaline Trio musically but they just seem to be trying to hard to be angst-ridden poets. There is a time and a place to be deep and philosophical but this ain't it. It gets dull real fast. —Ty Stranglehold (Jade Tree)

LOW BUDGETS, THE:

Aim Low, Get High: CD

This is indeed "low budget" rock, though not as lo-fi as the "budget rock" of the Mummies. This might be more like a Blue-Light-Special mix of the Spits and the Bodies. Not a bad mix, in my book, and especially endearing because they delight in skewering the wretchedly shallow corporate/consumerist values of the ovine American Mainstream and they do it with catchy, dorky panache. —Aphid Peewit (Schuykill)

MAD SIN: *Young, Dumb,*

and Snotty: CD

Mad Sin? Is that seriously the best name you could come up with? I mean, I know you're German, and I know you're a psychobilly band, and that's two strikes against the ol' intelligence factor, but come on. Mad Sin? Like, somebody just showed up to practice and said, "We'll call ourselves Mad Sin," and everybody agreed that that was a good idea? And you've gone eighteen years without realizing how stupid it is? Jesus. Anyway, like I said, it's a psychobilly band, so pretty much if you've heard one psychobilly song, you've heard this. —Josh (Cargo)

MAGNOLIA THUNDER-

PUSSY: *Starin Down the Sun: CD*

From the vaults of obscurity comes this unearthed treasure. Magnolia Thunderpussy were a bunch of L.A. teenagers that were tight with Black Flag and Flea back in the mid-1980s. SST label head Greg Ginn was interested in putting out a record by the group but for some reason it never happened. By 1986 the band was kaput. Bassist David Jones decided to "unleash the fury" from the vault in 2004. Split between eleven studio tracks and a live beach show the next day, *Starin Down the Sun* shows the band's dexterity. Guitarist Chris

Hundley alternates between jazzy passages and full-on shredding. Pat Palma's drums are maniacal but precise at the same time. Bassist Jones holds all the songs together with some fluid bass lines throughout. Lead singer Dale Nixon's vocals show a remarkable maturity at age seventeen. I bet you're thinking you've heard this singer's name before? Although the CD's liner notes could choke an elephant with all the name-dropping quotes, there's no mention of the "Dale Nixon factor." Greg Ginn used this alias on Black Flag's *My War* record after Chuck Dukowski bolted. This moniker has since been copied anytime an enterprising musician had wanted to guest on another musician's record and had been told "no way" by the fat cats at a major label. Brian Baker and Dave Grohl have later borrowed this alias along the way. So there's your punk cred history for Magnolia Thunderpussy. But the music is what's important here, my friends. Some of the songs like, "Outside Inside," explore some free-flowing jazz, while "Walls" offers up some Black Flag anger with some rage-filled vocals from Mr. Nixon. The title track reminds me of Angry Samoans without Metal Mike's angst. Like a bizarre mash-up of All, The Minutemen, and Black Flag, Magnolia Thunderpussy is an important link from the LA scene. If you see David Jones on the streets—bow down and offer praise for the release of this cool-as-shit CD. —Sean Koeppenick (Mar Vista)

MAGNOLIA THUNDER-PUSSY: *Starin' Down the Sun*: CD

Okay, I'm going out on a limb here, but I feel confident in saying this: THIS CD IS THE WORST PIECE OF SHIT I'VE EVER HEARD IN MY ENTIRE LIFE. Long, wanky "jams" that go nowhere. Fucking horrible singing. Lame art. This CD actually made me angry. If I had been riding in a car while listening to this, I'da thrown it out the window. Fuck this record. If you like it, please delete me from your friend list. —Ben Snakepit (Mar Vista)

MALAJUBE:

Le Compte Complet: CD

Don't know what it says, don't know what it means (seems to be from Montreal and French Canadian therefore), but what it sounds like is Danny Elfman interpreting Queen's *Flash Gordon* soundtrack. You know, lasers and stuff, but with a circus organ too. —Cuss Baxter (Dare to Care)

MASS SHIVERS:

Self-titled: CD

While it's no doubt terribly satisfying to pull off this sort of jazzcore artfest, it's not very fun to listen to. In fact, I listened to it twice and went angry both times, and long before the twenty-nine minutes were up. I liked it in the old days when people put their shit in toilets and it stayed there. —Cuss Baxter (Sickroom)

MIDNIGHT EVILS:

Breakin' It Down: CD

The Midnight Evils are an about-to-derail, greasy freight train of rock-'n'-roll fueled by fried chicken, sex with dirty fingernails, three-string bass, and sincerity. They're heavy, stomping, tilt their collective head to AC/DC, and, without posturing, make you believe that the fat, the ugly, the warty, and the unpopular will always have a leg up on making the most direct, no-bullshit rock around. Fans of Motörhead, The Dirtys, the B-Movie Rats, and Poison Idea would be hard pressed to be disappointed. Pass up that false-pouty silver spoon, treadmill, "too much about nothing" garage fluff that's getting TV play and dig into some musical meat that'll stick to your ribs. —Todd (Estrus)

MIDNIGHT TRAMP:

I'm Back + In Spite of Appearance b/w

Higher & Higher: 7" 45

One: Don't be put off by the suck-ass name (may I suggest "Tridnight Mamp" as the front-runner for any potential rechristenings?), this stuff is decent as shit. Two: Sounds kinda like what one might imagine Moby Grape or the Flamin' Groovies might have sounded like had they taken things one level more bubblegum or Monkees-oid, or maybe it kinda sounds like what the Real Kids might have sounded like had they had a tendency towards more wide-open song struc-

tures in lieu of their usual conciseness. Three: The temporal interval containing the highest concentration of the band's influences likely starts with the first Beatles album on the left of the timeline and the Guess Who on the right, although the contemporary band i would feel most comfortable equating them to would be the FEVERS. Feel free, at need, to consult me on other weighty matters. BEST SONG: "I'm Back" BEST SONG TITLE: "In Spite of Appearance" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This is the best Canadian band whose name begins with the letters "MI" right now. Also, i thought the font on the cover was Bastion, but now i'm not so sure. —Rev. Nørð (Zaxxon Virile Action)

MILLENCOLIN:

Kingwood: CD

I wrote this off to the errors of a new band: overproduced, no real identity, and most of the songs sounding the same. Then I found out they've been together for over ten years. Yikes! Radio-friendly pop with an edge. —Megan (Burning Heart)

MILLION DOLLAR

MARXISTS: *Stop* b/w

Parasite: 7" 45

I dunno, whenever i listen to this band all i can think of is that i bet they have tattoos on the insides of their forearms. Not that there's anything wrong with that. From the record's press release: "M&M came together with one simple goal: THE RE-INVEN-

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TION OF CANADIAN ROCK & ROLL. Uh, good luck with that. **BEST SONG:** "Stop," or maybe "Parasite" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Stop," or maybe "Parasite" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** "Stop," or maybe... oh, never mind. -Rev. Nerb (Blue Bus)

MISERY: Next Time/

Who's the Fool...: CD

I have to admit that I didn't have my hand in the cookie jar as much as I should have during the early to mid '90s. I have seen items from this band in the past but I tend to shy away from a lot of bands by the number of patches I see on the kids. So, I do not own a single item from this now legendary band until now. On the record label's website I noticed that this band can be described as "forefathers of crust," which baffles me. I thought the Amebix were one of the forefathers of the genre. That was like ten years prior. So in my opinion, the statement should have read "the forefathers of the second wave of crust." I don't want to sound like the bitter old guy because I really do like this. The sound is bottom-heavy, dirty, and metallic-tinged. It has many of the key ingredients that make my ears tingle: throat-shredding vocals of obvious disdain for injustices and topics of question of the time period. Many bands have come afterwards in this genre and have not quite pulled it off as well as this band. So chalk one up to a band that I would have continued to overlook if this CD had not come my way. -Donofthedeat (Profane Existence)

MONKEY PAW:

Honkey Kong: CD

It reminded me of what System of a Down would sound like if they were not a metal band. -Donofthedeat (4 Alarm, No Address)

MUNLY & THE LEE LEWIS HARLOTS: Self-titled:

CD & DVD

Much more sunken and skeletal in appearance than even Hank III yet manically alive, Munly (& the Lee Lewis Harlots) has been oft labeled simply "Gothic Country." Imagine the Rachels (the Quarterstick ones), the Handsome Family, Nick Cave, Bauhaus, and 16 Horsepower spending darkened hours passing around a bottle of XXX, telling languorous and remorseful spook tales before gesticulating frenetically and knocking over the lantern, thus burning down the barn. Whirls fantastically like a dervish and is as creepy and weepy as a poison sumac rash. -Jessica T (Alternative Tentacles/Smooch)

MUTANT: Self-titled: 7"

I get really excited when I get a package from Canada that is addressed from Schizophrenic Records. I have been corresponding with Craig for probably close to ten years. He would probably know better. As I'm pushing closer to forty, my mind is short-circuiting sometimes. In my hands is

another gem that the crazy Canuck has decided to release. I look at the cover and see most of the song titles are in Japanese. So, a new band from Tokyo, Japan, huh. How bad could this be? Not bad at all! Knowing what this label likes to release, it's going to be a punisher. A wail of a vocal and the thundering of some blast beats come blaring out of my speakers. It reminded me if Japanese bands Slang meets the Slight Slappers and Senseless Apocalypse to share DNA to create a new band. Not that this is all power violence. They come out with some straight but fast punk numbers. They mix up the tempos, but keep coming back with the blast beats to not let you forget that they are out to blow a new hole in you. I was playing this at 33 rpm because there are nine songs. I played it all the way through and didn't really think too much about it. The music sounded fine but the vocals did sound a little weird. So I replayed it at 45 rpm and all I could say was *whoa*. I really almost wet myself because I had the volume up a little too loud. Songs were now blazing out at rapid succession. This band plays pretty damn fast and the vocals are shrieking. I felt exhausted after a few spins at the right speed. These guys need to tour now and bring this madness to the Western Hemisphere. -Donofthedeat (Schizophrenic)

NAVEL: Depend: CD

For a not-very-famous band, I keep thinking that Leatherface must be huge in Gainesville and parts of Tokyo, because I've gotten so many albums from Gainesville's No Idea records and Tokyo's Snuffy Smile records that take so much from Leatherface that they should pay Frankie royalties. Not that I'm complaining. All rock bands and punk bands are just playing out variations on a theme. And when that theme comes from Leatherface's madness and melody, it usually makes me happy. I don't say this to pigeonhole Navel as a Leatherface cover band, but Leatherface is definitely the starting point. From there, they play with touches of 7 Seconds-like hardcore and Hüsker Dü sonic stylings. It all blends together pretty well. It's not the best thing that Snuffy Smile has to offer, but it's definitely worth the international postage. -Sean (Snuffy Smile)

NEVER ENOUGH: Dead Set on Destruction: CD

A discography CD for a band that been existence for only two years? If there is a demand for this to be re-released, who am I to judge? Well, here you have six tracks from an upcoming EP, a 7", demo and live tracks of no-nonsense straight edge hardcore that doesn't go overboard on the metal parts. My gripe is having the live tracks smack in the middle of the whole thing. I know chronologically it makes sense, but it does not stand up to the studio tracks, and that includes the demo. -Donofthedeat (Organized Crime)

NEW YORK REL-X, THE:

No Way Out: 7"

Buy this record, but don't listen to the B-side. B-sides are the traditional stomping ground of songs that don't make the LP, and here's a good example of why that's the case. Just annoying as all piss. *However*, buy this record for the A-side, and listen to it till you can't stand no more. Yeah, it's from the *Sold Out of Love* full-length, but pink and blue vinyl is worth having. That aside, "No Way Out" (i.e., A-side) is my new favorite tune. It's catchy, and has all the correct hooks and musical starts and stops, there's a bit of a soap opera mentality to it, and there's loads of nah-nah-nahs (Like Ribena in my Guinness! Nummy!) and the vocals have a swirly, bitter diva air, even if it has a tendency to sound like so many other wonderfully catchy rock'n'roll songs... So why fuck with a proven formula, especially if it doesn't sound formulaic when all is said and done? [Reviewer is not responsible if the rest of the full-length sucks.] -The Lord Kveldulfr (TKO)

NEW YORK REL-X, THE:

Sold Out of Love: CD

This female-fronted New York punk band has released an album full of heartbreak and anger. This sentiment is even captured in the cover art, which is an illustration of a big-busted woman covered in blood, tears, and red lipstick. The music is not extremely memorable or special. There are no guitar riffs or choruses that you just can't get out of your head or fall in love with. Really, it is just standard guitar, bass, and drum that goes in one ear and out the other without any emotional or knee jerk response. But, they have harmonized back up vocals, and lead vocals that are not just screaming in your ear, but singing with attempts at melody. Let me put it this way, I would not go to a show just to see them, but if they were playing in a lineup I wouldn't gouge my eyes out for having to sit through their set. Consequently, the album is decent and worth a *free* listen, nevertheless it is not taking a spot among my regular listening rotation of bands such as The Briefs, The Clash, and The Dead Boys. -Jenny Moncayo (TKO)

NIGHTBREED: Immortality through Ashes: CDEP

Sounds like a toned-down version of Unsane. Sounds like a belligerent drunk popping valium (synesthesia rules!). Slower, infectious songs that have a malicious droning quality that nonetheless fails to get dull. The possible negative result of this, though, is that the songs tend to bleed together and sound the same. That really didn't bother me, however, and became less of a problem the more that I listened to it. The six songs wound up working as a whole, much in the same dark, brooding fashion of the movements of a Chopin opus for a cello quartet. -The Lord Kveldulfr (Tragic End)

NO LESS:

Le\$son\$ 93-98: CD

Anytime a band mixes things up musically, they usually create an audio document that is not easily palatable to the senses. Following the demise of Plutocracy, these bay area misfits took the formula of mixing genres a step further. Taking punk, metal, grindcore, and adding samples and noise, they redefined the shape of making noise. I believe this a discography of sorts since I'm not familiar with the band. What I do know is this is manic like a pounding headache. The slow parts are really slow and the fast parts hit record speeds. The lyrics were simplistic but the music is the key here. They found their magic and had a uniqueness that cannot be denied. As irritating as this can be when not paying attention, upon further inspection, something should grab you if you are open-minded. -Donofthedeat (Push Down and Turn)

NOCTURNE FOR A DYING PLANET:

Self-titled: CD

Pretty solid ambient noise from former members of Goat Shanty and Divorce (no, I never heard of 'em either, but I like the names). I could live without the depressive piano number (and the somber mantle—why not call it Goat Divorce?), but overall they got the shit lined up just about right. -Cuss Baxter (Nocturne for a Dying Planet)

NO-FI SOUL REBELLION:

Lambs to the Slaughter:

CDEP

Man, it really took four months to record this? They must not have worked very hard. This is two people, dickering around on a four-track (or this late in the game they probably have Pro Tools or that "garage band" thing on their computer). There's an ironic R&B song, a couple of "rock" songs, keyboards, drum machines, whatever. It doesn't fall too far off the map from stuff like Gravy Train or the Hawmay Troof. I'm never one to take things too seriously, but this is just a little too goofy for me. It's not bad, it's even kinda cute, but I don't think I'm ever gonna listen to it again. -Ben Snakepit (Wantage USA)

NOFX: Insulted by Germans...

Again b/w Fanmail: 7"

Having some discretionary income at their disposal, NOFX is releasing a 7" every month for a year as a sort of fans-only release (I think) decorated with artwork submitted by their fans. It's that sort of forward-thinking dumbassery that NOFX's famous for, and the 7" that kicks it all off ain't too shabby. Clear, snotty and whiney punk that makes most critics cringe, the sub-urbs squeal with glee, and chain wallets jangle the world over. Me, I like 'em, ignoring the average dickery of their typical fan. The b-side's a Dickies cover. -Todd (Fat)



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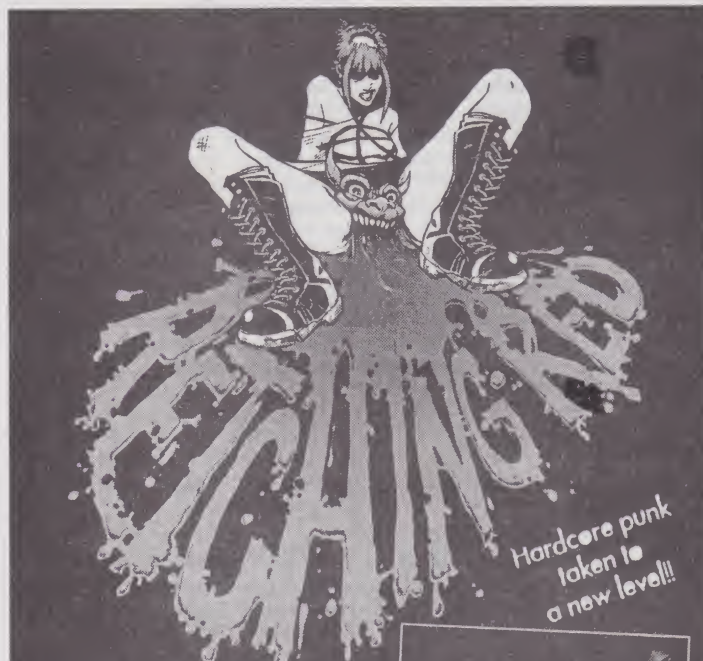
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NOFX: *Arming the Proletariat with Potato Guns* b/w *I Am Going to Hell for This One: 7"*

Since this is #2 of the series, I'm developing a couple of new theories. I think the backs of all the records are going to be some sort of puzzle, that when all twelve are put together, it'll look like a big poster. There's also a running joke about a punk, a rabbi, and a Republican forming in the matrix area of the vinyl. The a-side is El Jefe's horn front and center, and there are no lyrics. The band just does a round robin telling jokes. It fades off into applause. Ehh. The b-side's much better, talks shit about the current state of fear-driven Christianity, and correctly uses the word "hauteur." The vinyl, so far, looks pukey and diarrhea-y and matches the shade of color on the back of the record jackets. I'll keep you posted with developments. -Todd (Fat)

OBSERVERS, THE: *So*

What's Left Now: CD
 Portland punk rock with that Colin kid on bass, who's seemingly in about half of the fucking bands in the state. Portland, for whatever reason, is filled to overflowing with a plethora of four-chord punk bands that have the ability to play fun-as-hell, drunken, put-your-fist-in-the-air-and-sing-along basement shows and then just generally blow it when it comes to capturing that sense of fun and urgency in the studio (with bands like The Minds and The Epoxies notwithstanding). The recording's way too compressed, the guitar's bright as hell, and half the time the vocals are so full of reverb that it sounds like the dude's barking in a garbage can. With a warmer recording (as in, maybe they sound better on vinyl) and a bit of diversity in the vocals, they could have a hit, but as it is, let's just stick to the live shows. -Keith Rosson (Vinyl Warning)

OBSERVERS, THE: *Walk Alone* b/w *The Void*

Slipping Away: 7"
 For all you pining for the "good old days," and that there's nothing out there that's going to dethrone the past, that they wish they could go into the wayback machine to 1977 or 1982 or whatever, you can experience that type of glory in 2005 with The Observers. They tour like motherfuckers, don't sound quite like any other band out there, are explosive both on record and live, and you can get in on the ground floor of their musical holocaust (but in a good way, you know), right here, right now. (Just saw them. There were thirty people there, going nuts.) Don't miss out by staring at a big, sponsored-by-corporations stages and make dil-doey, ignorant statements like, "There's no good punk anymore." You'll be kicking yourself in a couple years if you don't even give The Observers a chance. Here are three more excellent songs by a band that deserves any and all the success coming their way. -Todd (Jonny Cat)

OBSERVERS, THE:

Walk Alone: 7"

Amazing. I've yet to hear a misstep from this band. Their music is hard to describe, in that they don't really sound like anybody else. You can pick out bits and pieces of their influences, but it would really be a disservice to say, "They sound like such and such band." Driving, intense, brooding, and wholly unique. This recording is a bit more raw than on their full-length, but I actually prefer it that way. The rawness suits them well and I think it makes them sound more cohesive, whereas the LP sounds a little isolated. Regardless, the Observers are one of the best bands going right now and these are three more reasons to own a record player. -Josh (Jonny Cat)

OFFENDERS, THE:

Endless Struggle: LP

This is a re-issue of The Offenders' second album. It originally came out in 1985 and it sounds like it. I mean that in all the best ways. The Offenders have that unbridled anger and frustration that made '80s hardcore great. The guitar and bass on this album are incredible, seemingly all over the place but the songs sound tight as hell. If you don't have this album, but you're a fan of bands like N.O.T.A., Negative Approach, and Poison Idea, pick up this re-issue before they're all sold out and you're back to hunting on eBay. -Sean (Kangaroo)

OFFENDERS, THE:

I Hate Myself/Bad Times: 7"

I have had a copy of this 7" for so long and haven't listened to it in years. I forgot what the songs sounded like. It's interesting and great that this 7" and the second LP *Endless Struggle* get re-issued. Also, a complete discography is in the works: all in one and no Ebay prices! This Austin, Texas band was a great band but was overshadowed by bands like the Dicks, Big Boys, NOTA, Stains (MDC), and DRI. But they were an important band of the time period. This 7" was originally released in 1984 on Rabid Cat Records. Both tracks on this reminded me of why I loved this band so much. It's potent and angry hardcore that still stands the test of time. I would compare them to BGK, even though I remember reading they were considered too American for the Europeans. Pressing comparison time: cover art has been completely changed so you can tell the difference from the two pressings. The new pressing is made with a heavier gram vinyl and the grooves are cut wider. With modern mastering, this version actually sounds better and louder on the new release. I can't wait for the discography CD! -Donofthedeat (Kangaroo)

ONE REASON:

Defiance, Ohio: 7"

If you've ever listened to This Bike Is a Pipebomb and wished that the woman would sing more, then I have

a record for you. One Reason take the right parts from American folk and country (and I mean real country, not the pop country that's everywhere these days) and fuses them into punk rock seamlessly, much in the way This Bike Is a Pipebomb does. And, of course, it's primarily bold, female vocals. I reviewed their full-length positively about a year ago, and that CD got a lot of turns in my stereo. I think this seven inch is even better. The songs are tighter, the vocals sound more confident, and there's a good deal of variation between the four songs. I'm keeping my eye on this band. —Sean (One Reason)

OSCARS:

Death to America: 7" EP

Arty, slow to mid-tempo punk rock with echoes of the Urinals, the Wipers, and some long-lost early hardcore band I can't quite put my finger on. Not bad. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.oscarsindustries.com)

OUT COLD:

Goodbye Cruel World: CD

I still stand by that the previous record: *Will Attack If Provoked* is an unheralded hardcore gem—one of the top ten of the last decade. Although far from a bad album, *Goodbye Cruel World* doesn't quite measure up to the power, intensity, and hidden chord melodicism (where it seemed that the faster they belted it out, the catchier it got, which is still a mystery) of its predecessor, it's still satisfying. Barked

vocals, believably bleak lyrics, stark guitars, and conviction make it heads and shoulders above whatever screamo dog and pony show is being peddled to impressionable kids for the next five minutes. I just don't feel the chills with this record and I wish I did. —Todd (Acme)

PAINT IT BLACK:

Paradise: CD

I really hate getting review material that is only the CD. No lyrics to reference, no pictures to look at, just a disc with a track list on it. Don't most of the labels know that we are record and music collecting geeks? The music better be good. Luckily for me, it is. One of the current hardcore bands of the moment that's going for the championship belt. Paint It Black play fast, direct, and to the point music that catches you out of breath with its intensity. They sing songs about things I have no real clue of (since I don't have the lyric sheet to reference), but I do know the title. But I really am a person who gets caught up with the music more than a person who analyzes lyrics. I have to feel the music before I can pay attention. Read many good things on the net about this release. So, with so many voices praising this release, it seems that I am on the right side of the fence on this one. —Donofthedeath (Jade Tree)

PEELANDER-Z:

Dancing Friendly: CD

Peelander-Z are back on their own Eat

Rice Records after a stint on a posh label and their sound and songs are better than ever! There's even a song from a certain Miss Peelander-Pink this time! If you missed them at last year's SXSW Festival... or even this year... never fear! They tour the U.S. practically every year! The live show is amazingly funny and amazingly good! J-PUNK LIVES IN NYC! AND THIS CD IS LIVING PROOF! —Mr. Z (Eat Rice; www.peelander-z.com)

PEGS, THE: E.P....

Period the End: CDEP

One can come up with a host of reasons why Hostage Records should be given a full wall of their own in the punk rock hall of fame, not the least of which being that they have introduced some seriously good bands to the punk rock world. The Pegs, featured on Hostage's *Tower 13* comp, is just such a band. Here they dish up seven tunes of beach punk thuggery, catchy as hell, and solid like a thwack to the jaw. If Smogtown, the Numbers, or any of their contemporaries make your rump shake, then these guys will more than do the trick for ye. —Jimmy Alvarado (Pop Scar)

PICTURE FRAME

SEDUCTION: Sex War: CD

I guess I'm not down with UK Punk '82. I mean, I never got drunk with them, so I'm not among the ones they thank. They up the punk by writing songs about stuff like war and crap, then write about sex. In the same

song. I know, I was floored, too. —Megan (Cult Jam)

PICTURE FRAME

SEDUCTION: Sex War: CD

Picture Frame Seduction are a UK punk/oi band from the '80s. The album *Sex War* contains eleven new songs and nine bonus live tracks recorded at the UK Punk All-Dayer. The music is fast and hard, with quick drum beats and bass riffs that scream savage skill. "UK 82" is a catchy song that plucks at your musical bone with a fierce bass intro that leads into a classic skinhead sing-along circle pit song. Many songs discuss politics, with a heavy focus on the war and current U.S. politics, with song titles such as "Blair Bush Project" and a lot of album art of Bush and war. At times, the lyrics are elementary and not incredibly impressive like in the song, "Spit or Swallow" with lyrics like "Who should they follow/Spit or swallow" repeated multiple times in a long song. The live portion of the CD displays the band's ferocious playing speed and ability to start a circle pit. Fans of UK punk, especially the Exploited and GBH, will most likely embrace this CD with open arms. —Jenny Moncayo (Cult Jam)

PINK LINCOLNS:

Background Check: CD

Things started off well enough with this disc and then—yugh—all of the sudden there was the theme song from the odious *Friends* TV show, sitting

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there like a finger in my chili. Thankfully, my music critic super-powers kicked in and I was able to overcome my initial revulsion and continue listening with a more receptive attitude. And it paid off, as it usually does. The PLs' snotty deconstruction of that particular putrid butt-brownie of a song turned out to be funny and deeply satisfying, as did the rest of the CD. This is one heaping helping of the Pink Lincolns. Thirty-two tracks of previously unreleased songs, demos, alternate mixes and covers, which are all over the map, ranging from X-Ray Spex, 999, Flipper and Wire to Elton John and Flock of Seagulls. And they get extra-credit huckleberry points from me for a faithful rendition of Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs' "Foggy Mountain Breakdown." The incestuous blending of punk and hillbilly always produces such wonderfully deformed offspring, in my humble opinion, because they are, underneath it all, both "folk" music. As good as the covers are on this disc (and the Black Flag covers in particular are extra good), the originals are even better. I think my favorite song of them all is a scathing anti-celebrity paean called "Fuck Madonna." Anyone who attacks celebrities and bad TV shows like a retarded pitbull—and, at the same time, manages to snot-rock it out as much as the Pink Lincolns do—wins me over everytime. —Aphid Peewit (Hazzard)

PINK RAZORS:

Scene Suicide: CDEP

Oh yeah. Fuck yeah! This band is from Richmond, VA, where I grew up. This record almost makes me wish I still lived there. It totally reminds me of the glory days of Avail, but doesn't really sound too much like them. It's more like Dillinger Four or *Tired of You*-era Scared of Chaka. It's fucking excellent. Great lyrics: my favorite is the song "Dear Jurisprudence," about the shitty urban sprawl that's been fucking up Richmond the past few years (hey guys, you're not alone, that shit is happening everywhere). Great production and I'm really stoked to see this on Robotic Empire. It's nice when a label doesn't just stick to one kind of music 'cause this thing is awesome and I think I might glue my CD player shut with this in it. I cannot possibly give this record a higher recommendation. Just go fucking get it now! —Ben Snakepit (Robotic Empire)

PITCH BLACK: This Is the Modern Sound: CD

This goes in kinda sounding like (International) Noise Conspiracy and comes out kinda sounding like the Murder City Devils. I am a little wary of this record. The artwork is really "pro" and the whole thing comes across looking like a Target commercial. The music's not bad, just a little contrived. I kinda get the feeling this band wants to "make it," and that kinda makes me not like them. I don't trust 'em. —Ben Snakepit (Revelation)

PLASTIC FANTASTICS,

THE: Self-titled: CD

Sounds like about eighty percent Nine Inch Nails and twenty percent Wall of Voodoo. Those are amazing figures. Actually, I just made them up. BEST SONG: "God Damn Radio." BEST SONG TITLE: Either "God Damn Radio" or "Sorry I Killed You" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Mastered by John Golden! Oh my God! Oh my God! —Rev. Nørð (DNA Productions)

PNEUMONIAS, THE:

Self-titled: 7" EP

Thuddy garage punk, very Loli and the Chones/Rip Off Records. Songs are approximately twice the length they need to be, but this'll do the trick in a pinch. —Jimmy Alvarado (High School Refuse)

PONYS, THE:

Celebration Castle: CD

Indie pop from a group that has apparently learned well from those old post-punk pop albums from the '80s, 'cause that's where it sounds like they're taking their cues. Not a rehash here, but there's just enough Echo, Cure, and Furs in the mix to ring familiar. Surprisingly good stuff and outside of the box enough to sound fresh and inventive. I like it lots. —Jimmy Alvarado (In the Red)

PRIDEBOWL: Drippings of the Past: CD

I guess this is a reissue, as it says it

was originally released in 1996. Having realized that, this makes a lot more sense. It's melodic Swedish snowboardy punk with the mid-'90s sound of Fat Wreck bands like Lagwagon. It's not bad, it's not good, it's just kinda there. I don't understand why anyone would sink money into re-releasing this in 2005. It's ten years old and it sounds like it. I guess if I had been there back in the day I might like this more, but I wasn't. So I don't. —Ben Snakepit (Bad Taste)

PSEUDO HEROES:

Nostalgic Lies...: CDEP

At nine songs, this is the fattest EP this side of Star Jones' wedding dress. Featuring Sam Williams III (Down By Law, Electro-Requiem) on guitar, keyboards, and vocals; Kevin Coss (Pink Lincolns) on bass and Carlos Collins on drums, this band has the chops to bring the rock. "Open Your Eyes & I'll Close Mine" sports some sweet BOC type guitar and some powerhouse drumming by Collins. The title track has some nice bass blocks that give the song an English Beat type rhythm—very cool. "A Judgement Supreme" goes for broke and gives Minor Threat a run for their money. "Borrowed Bonds" features the more melodic side of the band—you'll be humming this one for days. Have I mentioned every song yet? Okay—I'm high on Pseudo Heroes—so sue me! —Sean Koepnick (Double Bonus/123)

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RAT BASTARDS:

Subvert and Deny: 7"

Breathless, strep-throat hardcore with tonsils popping everywhere like pans of Jiffy Pop popcorn. Equal parts crust, speed metal, and hundred-percent bilious contempt for everything on God's green earth. Ripping good. Fun fact for logo buffs: the Rat Bastards logo is sort of a cross between the classic Dead Kennedys' DK logo and something hanging in the woods in the *Blair Witch Project* and it looks like it was made with pretzel rods wrapped in hair. Neat. —Aphid Peewit (Kangaroo)

RATTUS: Self-titled: CD

A reissue of an album originally released back in 1984 on Ratcage Records, along with the band's *Ihmiset on Sairaita* EP tacked onto the end as a bonus. I am awed speechless that I'm holding this in my grubby little paws, so excuse me if I fail to gush like a giddy little schoolgirl when in the presence of fjordcore greatness, as I have been known to do on more than one occasion. If you have never heard of Rattus and are any sort of fan of hardcore, trust me when I say that they are one of the greatest punk bands this planet has ever produced. —Jimmy Alvarado (Zurich Chainsaw Massacre)

RED ALERT:

Excess All Areas: CD

Nice enough poppy oi from a band that's been around forever. While the songs aren't as immediately crucial as some of their previous work has been, and I ain't too hip on the metal guitars that seep in here and there, I wholly appreciate the substantive lyrics that accompany the riffage, something that is lacking much too often in punk rock anymore. If yer a fan, you won't be disappointed. If you haven't heard 'em, I recommend you start with *The Best of Red Alert* and proceed from there. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

REGULARS, THE:

Vegas: CD

All the way from Holland, another rockabilly band that sounds pretty much like every other one on the block. And why would you affect Southern accents if you already have your own wacky accent? This isn't reggae. Oh, and they cover "Ring of Fire," which was a very bad choice if they actually liked Johnny Cash. —Megan (Rebellion)

RIGHTEOUS JAMS:

Rage of Discipline: CD

When I saw the little Kung Fu logo on the back, I figured listening to this was going to be one

painfully bad experience. Surprise, surprise, my assumption was right on the money. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kung Fu)

RIPPERS, THE:

Invertebrät: CD

Were one to ogle the front cover, one might think that the red hand-snipped (hand-polygoned?) letters of the band name and the f'ed-up-typewriter lettering of the album title and the kinda Butthole Surfers-album-cover critter thereupon portended a good time for the listener (and that's not even factoring in the umlaut). This would be incorrect. This is metal-punk and thus without value. Good day. BEST SONG: Jeez, it's a real toss-up between "God Is Mortal" and "Don't Fear the End" BEST SONG TITLE: I can't bear to leave any out, they're all so wonderful. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Before the first band I was ever in played out, I wanted us to call ourselves "The Rippers." Hope these guys are all fifteen, too. —Rev. Nørb (H)

RITALINS: Kelly:

4-song 7" EP

I hope the person who wrote the verses to the title track and the person who wrote the choruses to the title track are two different people and that the guy who wrote the choruses kicks the guy who wrote the verses out of the band before their next record. I'm pretty sure the band did not need to write "I Wanna Be an Aper." I'm CERTAIN that I did not need to listen to it. Weaselcore of such tightness and nasality that it would not only make Timbo from Mutant Pop crap his pants, it would make him crap his pants *through his penis*. BEST SONG: Well, "Kelly" if that one guy kicks out the other guy and re-writes the verses. BEST SONG TITLE: "I Wanna Be an Aper." Yeah, think about THAT. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Band uses empty set in lieu of zero in "2002" and "2003." —Rev. Nørb (All Nite)

RIVER CITY TAN-

LINES: Black Night: 7"

Alicja (Lost Sounds) side project, sorta sped up early '80s rock Bo Diddley descendant, with production. Damned plucky. Feels like fun should. —Speedway Randy (Misprint)

ROGER MIRET & THE

DISASTERS: 1984: CD

Admittedly, they look like scary motherfuckers and could stomp me in a heartbeat. Admittedly, Roger Miret has been around since, well, before 1984. Admittedly, the Hellcat design lackey that did the album art def-

initely knows how to use InDesign. But these things do not necessarily a listenable or enjoyable record make, you know? I mean, I have some serious fucking problems with this piece of sonic catshit, even apart from the fact that at its core it's essentially a third-rate streetpunk record that wouldn't have been interesting two decades ago. Miret is apparently still flying the same street-thug bonehead flag that he's been flying for the past twenty-five years, if the lyrics are any indication. Openly homophobic since his early Agnostic Front days, he's still spewing the same tired old shit, with meditative, thoughtful lyrical gems like, "Suck another dick! Kiss another ass! How's your bed feel? You pathetic bitch!" Other lyrics are so blatantly similar to Clash, Ramones, and Rancid lines that you can't tell if Miret is doing some weird homage to them or if he's just really at a loss when it comes to writing songs about anything other than fighting, rioting and, uh, fighting. Miret's supposed legacy, to me, is questionable at best, considering the narrow-minded, arrogant, violent, homophobic, sexist lifestyle he's spent fucking years espousing, and when the music has about as many hooks as a sheet of Saran-Wrap, the lyrics sound like they were culled from a second-grade English primer, and in the liner notes they thank three clothing companies for the sweet hookups, it's painfully apparent that the time has come for the guy to just hang it up. —Keith Rosson (Hellcat)

SAFE INSIDE:

Self-titled: 7"

This little record—packed with fourteen midget-sized songs—reminds me of Henri Pougard, a Frenchman famous in fighting arts circles for his "Parisian Halitotic Attack" whereby he could render a man unconscious with nothing more than his own rancid hell breath. I love Safe Inside's asshair-burning brevity and shriek-core intensity, but it all kind of sounds the same to me, no matter how many song-like bursts you cram on this little piece of vinyl. —Aphid Peewit (Black Matter)

SATAN'S TEARDROPS/LEGENDARY HUCKLE-

BUCKS: Split: CD

Happily unleashed on Rock N Roll Purgatory, Satan's Teardrops (New Hampshire) and the Legendary Hucklebucks (Pittsburgh) team up to spew punka/rocka/psychobilly en masse. Standard three-chord punkabilly, Satan's Teardrops (new school) really bang the blower (no, not good) with a rickety version of "Crazy Crazy

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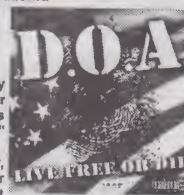
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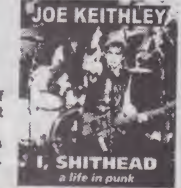


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Lovin'" and an uncomfortable cover of "Shame On Me." However, they drop the hammer (good) on their last two chances to impress: "Dark City Lights" and a beyond rockin' rendition of "I Got Stripes." Those two songs are glimmers of hope that maybe the band could always be that good, despite their foul start. Conversely, real punk, real psycho and real 'billy, the Legendary Hucklebucks blister right off the line and all the way down the track, flattening everything in range with a "Hell yeah!" as loud as 315 mph. As exciting and inspiring as Blazing Haley, but with a healthy dollop of East Coast muscle. Artwork by a legend. -Jessica T (Rock N Roll Purgatory)

SCENT OF HUMAN HISTORY/MEMORY AS PERFECTION: Split: LP

Memory as Perfection plays mediocre screamo with kinda wimpy-sounding guitars. They cite Page 99 and Shotmaker as influences, and they definitely draw heavily from both bands, but unfortunately don't add anything of their own, and the end result is not insincere, but pretty uninspired. Scent of Human History's side starts off a bit slow, but as the record progresses it gets better. I hear a lot of Maximillian Colby and the Exploder in here, with some nice fast parts a la early '90s Ebullition stuff. It's not bad. Overall, this record seems almost like an homage to days past, more than a document of anything new. -Ben Snakepit (Waking Records/Mccarthyism)

SCREECHING WEASEL:

Boogadaboogadaboogada: CD

It's awesome that Asian Man reissued this, but it's kind of a shame that it ever went out of print in the first place. You see, back in 1988 when this first came out, the state of punk rock, especially pop punk, was not doing so hot. Most of the hardcore bands had crossed over into the lucrative metal scene, and the only other "alternative" was indie college rock. (Fugazi's first record was out by then, but you kinda had to be a scenester to know about them.) So here comes Screeching Weasel playing pissed off, snotty pop punk with melody, and that god-damned one-string guitar solo that every pop punk band in history has since copied. If you like (or have ever liked) pop punk at all, this is a must-have. This was the beginning. Essential. -Ben Snakepit (Asian Man)

SCREECHING WEASEL:

My Brain Hurts: CD

No matter how much I hate Ben Weasel and his moronic (egotistic?) one-sided blog posts, and repeated unleashing of websites only to never update them—I admit that he is a great pop punk songwriter. Some of my favorite songs ever are SW tunes, and as far as I'm concerned *My Brain Hurts* is quite literally the best album released by the band. This is Asian Man's re-issue of it (which I own on tape, CD, and vinyl through the

Lookout original pressings) was remastered by Mass Giorgini (SW bassist on the last few CDs) and contains new layout work. The mastering job was done well, and I like how you can hear the backing vocals much clearer than on the 1991 versions, but the recording still sucks. Nothing you can do about that—blame it on low-end equipment and a speedy recording session. Oh, don't get me wrong, the sucky recording is part of the reason that makes this the best SW album of all time. Sometimes gritty, low-budget warmness feels better than recordings that cost more than homes in Chicago go for in 2005. I also noticed that Martin from Los Crudos took all the pictures. Too cool. Joe King's bio/liner notes commentary and the band members' song descriptions and flashbacks were also a nice treat. -Mr. Z (Asian Man)

SEX ROBOTS /

THE MEGA HURTS: Split 7"

The Sex Robots boil down and sieve the gelatinous spirit of Elvis Costello into a contemporary musical Jell-o mold that's just as good as Sweden's The Flakes and Psychotic Youth. They've nailed the swinging, crisp, forlorn quality of "everything may be fucked, but we're still dancing" vibe that most bands attempt, and fail, when approaching power pop. Cool stuff. The Mega Hurts: Come close to nailing it. They're a sloppy, charming, three women, one dude band, but they're not as catchy as the Pinkz or Bitch School, not as vocally powerful as The Beautys, but they've definitely got a stripped-down, acid sweetness Headcoates potential that, admittedly, got better and better with each spin. Not bad at all. -Todd (Roadhouse Tunes)

SHAI HALUD: A

Comprehensive Retrospective or: How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Release Bad

and Useless Recordings: CD

Two awful singers, mediocre riffs, and four songs at the end of the guitarist's practice tapes? Complete tommyrot. This is sixty-five minutes of my life that I will never, ever get back. I would rather watch golf all afternoon than listen to this CD again. To add insult to injury, Revelation Records neglected to include a jewel case so I can't even use it as a coaster for my vodka tonic. Bastards. -Sean Koepenick (Revelation)

SHAM 69: Tell Us

the Truth: CD

SHAM 69: That's Life: CD

SHAM 69: The Adventures of Hershman Boys: CD

SHAM 69: The Game: CD

After the Ramones and the Clash, Sham is easily one of the most influential bands to come out of punk rock. From them one can trace most, if not all, strains of oi and what is now called "street punk." Not only can those influential seeds be heard scattered

throughout their four original releases, one can also track the band's progression from rudimentary musicians to more accomplished songsmiths. Their first, *Tell Us the Truth*, is pure minimalist thud-punk—angry, violent, outraged. A number of their better known songs—"Borstal Breakout," "Hey Little Rich Boy," "Ulster," and "Rip Off" to name a few—can be found here, as well as their most direct working class attacks on a power structure that favors the more affluent, which is interesting to note considering the decidedly reactionary bent of many of the bands that followed in their wake. *That's Life*, while essentially following along the same lines as its predecessor, experiments a little with the template, adding occasional keys to the songs and spoken bits between tracks. *Hersham Boys*, progresses things along even further, and by *The Game*—paradoxically the band's worst selling album—the songs are finely honed missiles, providing the band's unpretentious beginnings a fine craftsman's sheen without sacrificing a whit of power or anger. Spread out over the four discs are twenty-nine bonus tracks culled from assorted demos, singles, and EPs for a more comprehensive collection of what remains Sham's finest years. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

SHOCK NAGASAKI/

STRAITJACKET: Split: 7"

Shock Nagasaki: Big oi influence, lots o' reverb for that anthemic sound, and

chant-friendly choruses. They're catchy, but a little more manipulative than's comfortable. Bet they get a lot of fist pumping from the crowd when they play. Straitjacket: similar to their record mates, in that they're obviously into the English punk thang and are just as catchy, but they also have a nugget of early OC hardcore buried in there as well, which makes things just a tad more interesting on their side. —Jimmy Alvarado (TKO)

SHONEN KNIFE: 712: CD

Man, I used to be a total Shonen Knife geek! These three girls from Japan were an obsession for me. I loved their handcrafted matching outfits, the songs about their favorite bands and especially all the songs about food! I saw them the first time when they came to Los Angeles to play. They flew here without their bass player Michie because she couldn't get off work and they had to teach another woman how to play bass in two weeks. If I remember correctly, she barely could do it so the guys in Redd Kross and White Flag helped out. The second time they came to L.A. to play was the same day as the release date of Metallica's black album. I went after the show to Tower Records who were selling the new CD after midnight. Whole different experience all together at that show. The first time was at a place that was like a school auditorium/gym. Seeing them at a club like the Roxy was great because of the good sound system and acoustics. I thought I was seeing a different band. When

this CD was originally released, this was the period when I was tapering off my obsession even though I have the original release both on vinyl and CD. My favorites are the *Burning Farm* cassette (I heard it was re-released on CD in the '90s) and the *Pretty Little Baka Guy* LP. Any lover of cutesy, simplistic bubblegum garage pop can not deny this band's appeal. I can't believe it took so long to have this reissued. —Donofthedeat (Oglio)

SHONEN KNIFE: *Pretty*

Little Baka Guy: CD

Sugar-sweet, barely competent pop tunes sure to send even the casual listener into hypoglycemic shock is Shonen Knife's territory, one they have never strayed from in nearly twenty years. In the annals of punk history, only Shonen Knife has managed to get away with not only writing some of the most innocent sounding, syrupy pop songs ever put to tape, but also straight-up ripping off their heroes ("Devil House," for example, is a total bite of the Buzzcocks' "What Do I Get") and have you think it was the greatest, most original stuff you've ever heard. I wore out my cassette copy of the Gasatanka version of this album years ago, so it's a treat getting this on disc. Seem to remember the tape having more live tracks than this does, though. No matter. Shonen Knife is an acquired taste, no doubt, but those with just such a sweet tooth would find this more than satisfies. —Jimmy Alvarado (Oglio)

SICK OF IT ALL:

Outtakes for the Outcast: CD
A collection of fifteen mostly previously unreleased, B-side and import-only tracks recorded from 1994-2000, with the exception of "Just Look Around," recorded in 1992. Includes covers of Sham 69's "Borstal Breakout," the Misfits' "All Hell Breaks Loose," Hüsker Dü's "Target," and more. I must admit that hardcore is not my forte, but I do enjoy some pretty raw shit on occasion. However, this album is aimed straight down the middle and therefore fairly humdrum. —Jessica T (Fat)

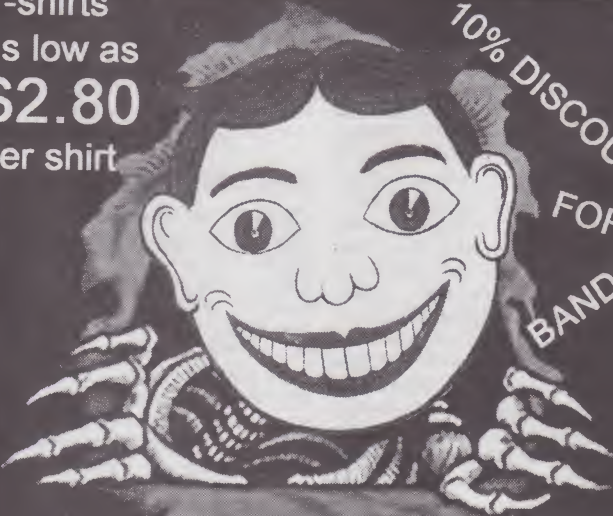
SIX SIX CRUSH:

Self-titled: CDEP

There used to be a low-down sleaze-fuck band here in the Twin Cities called the Coffin Cheaters, and they were to the local "scene" what halfwit serial killer Otis Toole would be to the Pope's funeral, especially if he had his pants down and was pleasuring himself in one of the pews. They were loud and unscrubbed and they were one of my favorite bands to go listen to. Then came a parting of ways and the band split up and I was left standing there wondering where I would get my next fix of crushing scumpunk. Fortunately for me, Six Six Crush has arisen from the ashes of the burned down outhouse that was the Coffin Cheaters. And SSC, like all good children, carry on the parent's perversions; the perversions in this case being a tendency to pound listeners over the heads with a

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concrete toilet plunger—albeit without the Mentors-esque lyrics the Coffin Cheaters were known for. I don't know who I like better, the Coffin Cheaters or Six Six Crush, but that's sorta like arguing about whose trouser pike was bigger, Rasputin or Uncle Miltie. This band is the snarling offspring of one evil motherfucker of a band and I for one am glad that this pissed-in gene pool will continue to kick and claw its way up (or down) the evolutionary ladder, one way or another. Fans of the Midnight Evils might want to check these guys out. I can't wait for the full length. —Aphid Peewit (six_six_crush@hotmail.com)

SKEEMIN' NOGOODS:

Skeemin' NoGoods: CD

Sometimes records come with a host of expectations: a one-sheet hyping members past bands or possibly a publicist tossing out a handful of comparisons at you. The Skeemin' NoGoods showed up without much fanfare—just another disc slipped in with a handful of others in a padded manila envelope. And then sometimes, when you slip it in the CD changer and press play, your whole world gets rearranged. And that's what happened to me with the Skeemin' NoGoods. Cut one ("I Want Something") jumps out at you with the fervor of classic speedball punk; think Johnny Thunders filtered through more beer and bands like The Humpers or Riverboat Gamblers. I'm thinking, "This is good shit," but secretly hoping it doesn't go down as

predictably as a twelve-pack of PBR. By track two ("Politicians"), an Agnostic Front street punk styled run-up about dirty politics, and I'm totally thrown off course for my predictions. Then, the band has the fucking balls to follow up these with "Punch the Clock," an infectious '70s rocker that recalls Cheap Trick and Thin Lizzy respectively. Fuck me. So I Google their ass and find out that they are on the Dallas-based label Idol Records which is home to VH1's *Band On The Run* winners Flickerstick and aging Lollapalooza staples from '95-'96 Sponge. Now I'm even more confused. Add to the fact that the band is from Detroit, features John Speck (formerly of Fags, The Paychecks), and none other than Ron Sakowski of Necros, Laughing Hyenas, Easy Action fame on bass, and drummer Chuck Burns (I apologize for not referencing past acts here, but goddamn, this guy definitely splinters his sticks when he plays) and you've got one of the hardest three-piece bands I've ever heard. And they do a cover of fucking Skrewdriver's "I Don't Like You." Fuck me again. —Greg Barbera (Idol)

SLAPSHOT:

Tear It Down: CD

Never really liked these guys much, and was wholly unimpressed with 'em the one time I saw 'em, and yet I'm kinda diggin' this. It ain't the post-Minor Threat, Boston circa '86 vaguely metal feel of this, 'cause that ain't so new and inventive, and lord knows

I've said more than enough times that most metallic hardcore gives me a rash. Mostly I think it's 'cause, in this post-9/11 world where it seems the entire world acts toward the Big Apple like co-dependent parents coddling victimized progeny, these guys have the huevos to lay down a ditty entitled "Fuck New York." Gotta love that. —Jimmy Alvarado (Thorp)

SMOKE OR FIRE:

Above the City: CD

So I had heard that this was Jericho's first release for Fat but had to change their name because a '70s Christian rock band originally had the name. I wonder if it would have been worth it to contact the old band and had a tournament of dodgeball, drunk bowling, and marbles. Winner gets the name. I never heard Jericho's music before. If I did, I don't remember. I can't just make this stuff up. I have to actually listen to this. So the singer sounds like Justin Sane from Anti-Flag. The music sounds like water balloon fight between Rise Against and Hot Water Music. Not a bad combination and a worthy addition to the Fat family. This release will definitely get a few more rotations on the player. —Donofthedeat (Fat)

SMOKE OR FIRE:

Above the City: CD

There's a perishability quotient involved with gruff, melodic, socially conscious punk. Many bands have found and explored the hallmarks: the understated poetics of Leatherface, the soaring jet fighters high in the sky guitars of Hot Water Music, the riot of anthems of Strike Anywhere, the hidden complexity presented through mugs of beer of the Tim Version, the playful seriousness of The Grabass Charlestons. There's actually a pool of bands that stand comfortably in those waters, and although very good, don't warrant extra spins. At first, I was just okay with Smoke or Fire. The vocals seemed just a hair too processed. Several of the songs blended together. But then I started to realize that the CD wasn't going out of rotation. And then—here's when I know a band's got me, because I listen to so much music on a continual basis—I was humming one of their lines while shampooing in the shower. Ever since the first couple of listens, I've taken this CD on trips through three states, it works well both in traffic jams and wide open spaces, and all the little bits that first bothered me have disappeared. They remind me of a mix between Avail and early Explosion: catchy, sincere, and a full body experience (head, chest, and legs are all affected), and that's pretty darn good for a debut. —Todd (Fat)

SNUFF: Six of One, Half a Dozen of the Other: 1986-2002: 2 X CD

For some reason, and I'm not quite sure, but I often forget how great Snuff can be. They're cheeky Brits with a weird sense of humor (just look at the fuckin' names of their albums:

Demmamussabe bonk? *Flibbiddybidydob?*), a longtime love of Vespas and Lambrettas, and the uncanny knack to be utterly silly yet still pull out some seriously great punk rock at the same time. It's sometimes hard to get the pulse if they're just that cursory and talented (let's fuck around and play ping pong for days in the studio and cut six tracks without overdubs at the last minute, or so the story goes), or if there's a pattern to their functional dysfunction. Snuff comes from the hairy, incestuous school of British punk that commingled and merged with Leatherface (powerful, soulful, gritty) and Wat Tyler (who have songs about Smurf sex). Well, I know this for sure, if you've ever liked Snuff or if you'd like an intro to a prolific band, this collection's like a deep-sea dragnet. Washing machines get pulled up with the fish. You get many gems, some dogs; tastes will vary. The first CD is all previously released stuff that's reasonably easy to get, but spread out over sixteen years and numerous albums. The second CD's all more obscure: b-sides, comp tracks, tour-only releases, unreleased tracks, and ends with a trippy dub track that underscores the fact that Duncan (drummer, lead singer: same setup as The Carpenters) smokes a lot of weed. When all's said and done, Snuff is melodic punk done right. My favorite stuff's still the songs with the horns and organs from *Potatoes and Melons* at *Wholesale Prices Straight from the Lockup*. —Todd (Fat)

SOLE: Live from Rome: CD

Politically conscious rap from a guy who doesn't spend too much time bothering to rhyme. He's got a nice flow, but the resulting tunes are nothing to write home about. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.anticon.com)

SPINNING HEADS:

Change the Game: LP

"Fuck, this is good!" I actually said that out loud to nobody when I was listening to this record. It's brutal, heavy hardcore with a real metal edge. You know how you'll listen to Dillinger Escape Plan and think, "Wow, this band would be really good if they'd quit showing off and just rock." That's sorta what this band sounds like. Excellent production and songwriting alike, I never got bored during any song. I'm surprised they're from France, but that just makes them that much cooler. If I was gonna listen to something to get pumped up for a lawnmower race, I'd listen to this. —Ben Snakepit (Sedition)

SQUARE THE CIRCLE:

Self-titled: 7"

If there's one thing that the Japanese know, it's how to make a good hardcore record. Square the Circle are from Tokyo and they play really tight thrash a la Tear It Up or What Happens Next. I hesitate to compare them to Japanese contemporaries like Total Fury, 'cause they kinda rock harder than that. Think *Nothing to Nothing* by Tear it Up but gnarlier and dirtier. Oh, and the lyrics

are fucking hilarious: "Wanna be a queen? The pose of hick when a happy in the day." Maybe it's wrong of me to make fun of their English since I can't speak Japanese, but, then again, I'm not trying to write songs in Japanese and put them out on a record, either. Regardless, this record is great! —Ben Snakepit (Kangaroo)

STATIC AGE, THE: *Neon Nights Electric Lives*: CD

When I was but a young punk, nothing worked to impress all the young punkettes like showing your "emotional" side. This consisted of throwing on a Cure or Joy Division record. "See, I can be sensitive too... now gimme some sugar!" The truth is, I really quite enjoy those bands and there are certain times in my life when no other band will do. Yup, I can admit it. This brings us to the Static Age. I was really hoping for some kind of Misfits type thing but no such luck. If I didn't know better, I'd swear that this was released in 1985 or '86. Heartfelt tunes with piano and bad synth. It's not that it's terrible, just that it's been done before and so much better. Blandness personified. I can't see this record getting teenage punks laid. If I want quality emotion in my rock, I'll listen to Leatherface again. I just can't say the same for this. —Ty Stranglehold (Tarantulas)

STATUES: *Aux*: CD

Three-piece from Ontario, Canada, this record is a re-release from 2004. Taut rhythms, grinding guitar parts, and melodic vocals make this a real treat for my bored ears. Think of Joe Jackson (without the wimpy piano) fronting The Plimsouls and you'll begin to get the idea. "Barstool" mentions something about flying beer bottles and "Step Up"'s infectious chords will spread through your bloodstream like a viral infection. "Signals" also completely rocks. *Aux* wraps up with "There Are Things I Think You Should Know," which is hard to say ten times fast. If you can't find your Thin Lizzy vinyl at your next late night pops party, this will do the trick. Too bad they left The Flock Of Seagulls cover off this platter. Maybe that and "The Great White North" on the next one. —Sean Koepenick (Pelado)

STIV BATERS:

Disconnected: CD

In honor of Mr. Baters, who served posthumously and well as my fanzine's Math Editor back in The Day, I'll put things mathematically: There are 14 Stiv Baters tracks that you need to own. 9 of them compose "Disconnected," the punk-pop solo album released contemporaneously with the Dead Boys' demise. 5 of them—"Circumstantial Evidence," "I'll Be All Right," "Not That Way Anymore," his cover of the Choir's "It's Cold Outside" and the 45 version of "The Last Year"—were exclusive to singles. To not possess each and every one of said 14 tracks is an affront most grievous; to possess any-

thing Stiv-credited above and beyond the previously mentioned Big 14 is a superfluous indulgence reserved for fops, dandies, and repeat snake oil consumers. I did not buy *Disconnected* upon initial release, as, if you'll cross-check the math, it was a power-pop ("punk-pop" perhaps more accurate a hyphenate) album with nine songs. What the fuck kinda power pop album has only NINE songs on it? That's right! The kinda power pop album I don't buy! I mean, everybody knows that power pop albums have twelve songs on them. That is a rule of some sort. To fuck with the 12-count Golden Mean O' Power Pop is to court disaster, or, worse yet, the withholdal of currency! (now, okay: One might think one has a leg to stand on in defense of the three-songs-light lid of *Disconnected* by pointing out that punk albums are supposed to have fourteen songs on them, but Stiv's old band, the Dead Boys, who were punk, only put ten songs on each of their albums, and that therefore $9 < 12$ in the same way that $10 < 14$ so it's all good, but I refute this backpedaling jive by pointing out that the Dead Boys only put ten songs on their albums because that's what ROCK bands did, and the Dead Boys thought they were ROCK. At no point in time could power pop confuse itself with a nine-song-per-album type genre, if such a thing even exists [and, if it does, like, who cares?]). So, anyway, yeah, I never bought it when it came out the first time. A few years later, some French label came out with a Stiv album called *The Lord and the New Creatures* which was the 9 *Disconnected* songs + the 5 songs exclusive to singles = all 14 of the necessary solo Stiv sub-objects. THAT is what you should buy, if they still make it. I mean, I will admit that it was a bit of a shock to the system to hear that first Stiv Bators 45 ("It's Cold Outside" b/w "The Last Year") in '79, and see Our Hero go from leather-licking King of the Jackals to blouse-wearing Gelding Prince in one quick and decisive Pop Gambit—but, despite sounding like a cross between the Stiv we all knew (and, counterintuitively, loved) and Laurie Records, the Searchers vs. Byrds vs. Dead Boys charms of the real early Stiv solo stuff cannot be denied (I dutifully point out that by the time *Disconnected* had rolled out, things had regressed to the mean a bit, and were sounding a bit more like Dead Boys vs. *Nuggets* than Dead Boys vs. Searchers/Byrds). Which, of course, brings me back to the task at hand: Reviewing *Disconnected*. Well, HA! I CAN'T! I can't disconnect *Disconnected* from the full fourteen-song mass of Relevant Stiv material; to me, it sounds like 9/14ths of a classic album. Oh, sure, *Disconnected*, understocked as it is, is worth owning IF, by cruel marketplace realities, you have no recourse to *The Lord and the New Creatures*, but, I mean, to me, *Disconnected* is like taking "Judy Is a Punk," "I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend," "Loudmouth," "Let's Dance," and

"Listen to My Heart" off the first Ramones album, then trying to pretend nothing is amiss (although I will admit that ending *Disconnected* with "I Wanna Forget You (Just The Way You Are)" makes more sense than the sequencing on *Lord*, which ended each side with a version of "The Last Year," which sorta makes sense too). This is the second time Bomp! has reissued *Disconnected* on CD, and also the second time they padded it out with essentially irrelevant bonus cuts in lieu of the 5 songs I consider to be part 'n' parcel of the Stiv experience. Of course, as with the last reissue, the five songs are available—padded out with even more irrelevant bonus material on a second album, meaning that you, tragic figure, have to buy 2 albums, then play the first 9 songs off the first one and the first 5 songs off the second one in order to replicate the effects of The One True Stiv Thing, *The Lord and the New Creatures*. Might I suggest you riot? BEST SONG: "Evil Boy" BEST SONG TITLE: "Evil Boy" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The live version of the Syndicate of Sound's "Hey Little Girl" on this reissue is a different live version of the Syndicate of Sound's "Hey Little Girl" than the one that appeared on the *Disconnected* reissue from the '90s—and, of course, both are totally different than the live version of the Syndicate of Sound's "Hey Little Girl" that was on the first Dead Boys album. Whoopee ding. —Rev. Nørb (Bomp!)

STRAIGHTJACKET:

Enemy b/w 30+ Years: 7"

Surely played, pleasant '77 punk. The band plays like veterans (think Subversives, The Murders), and although not burning down any new barns (it's more like a pilot light that never went out, and can heat up, depending on the situation), they've got the art of melodies and backups down, the guitarists do nice little flourishes to keep the standardization at bay, and the two songs switch up vocalists. They're definitely aware of the template and its limitations, but they're also confidently pushing at its boundaries and playing to its strengths. This could have easily come out on a Hostage comp. Satisfying. —Todd (Jonny Cat)

SUGAR EATER:

American Idle: CD

On the whole, a fairly uninteresting six minutes wasted on faux-snotty, smart aleck punk and a limp (no pun intended) cover of the Circle Jerks' "Operation." That said, let me say that if you're in a so-called "punk" band and you feel the need to do a "clean" version of one of your songs, especially when the bass player goes by the first name "Fellatio," then you really need to reassess your involvement in this punk thing, 'cause it's painfully obvious you just don't get it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Eyeephant)

SUSPICIONS, THE: *We're*

All Wrong b/w Memory: 7"

Sounds like a tinny, mildly incompetent version of Nikki & The Corvettes tracks not about overt kitsch, or maybe like if the Spastics' first 45 was an attempt at sounding like the songs off of *Modern Kicks*. Worth owning but not worth busting a nut looking for. BEST SONG: "We're All Wrong" BEST BOARD GAME: "Memory," but only the version where some are the tiles are from House Of Cards by Eames. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACTS: 1. 45 sleeve does not directly bear the band's name—a round orange sticker reading "THE SUSPICIONS" is affixed to the otherwise wordless front cover; 2. The font used is CA KissKissBangBang, the same font I used for the *Razorcake* cover I did a while ago. —Rev. Nørb (Nerve Wracking)

TARAKANY!: *Fear and Hatred*: CD

TARAKANY!: The Best is Enemy of the Good: CD

TARAKANY!: Freedom Street: CD

Three albums (one a reissue of a 2002 album, one a "best of" and one apparently a recent release) from a Russian punk band. From what I can glean via the English explanations of some of the songs, their lyrics are of the substantive variety, and I give 'em much respect for trying to have a point deeper than "Look at me! I'm snotty and clever," but I gotta admit their "modern" punk sound sounded about as uninteresting as most other bands mining similar territory. A little more edge to the sonic package and I'd be right on board with 'em.

—Jimmy Alvarado (Zurich Chainsaw Massacre)

TEDDYBOYS FROM THE

CRYPT: Self-titled: 7" EP

Retro-'60s fuzz punk from Greece. Kinda reminds me a little of the Gravedigger V on downers. Pretty good at what they do, I'll give 'em that. —Jimmy Alvarado (Tassos Palaiologos)

TERRIBLES, LES:

Self-titled: CD

If I ever own a bar, it's gonna be called "The Purple Pussycat" and at least half the jukebox is gonna be songs sung in French, unless I open up the bar in France, in which case the only song on the jukebox is going to be that German drinking song "Norbert, Norbert, Oi Oi Oi," for obvious reasons. I mean, who wants stock the juke with trite, over-hashed chestnuts such as "I Can Only Give You Everything" and "All Day and All of the Night" sung in plain ol' English, when, with the judicious application of a little Les Terribles, one can stock it with just-hashed-enough French language versions of the same (to say nothing of "Rosbeef Attack," which has no

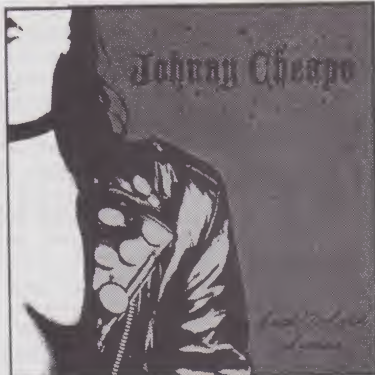
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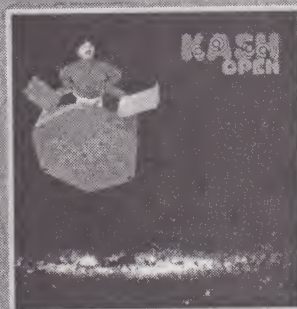
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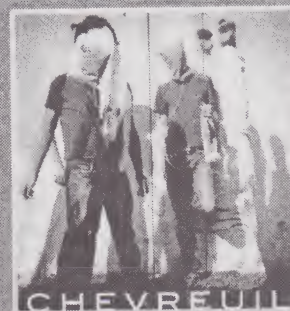
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language at all, save the universal linguist of both ROCK and MEAT?? Bewigged French beatsters, take note! Follow in the Beatle-booted footsteps of Les Terribles, and let French be your *lingua franca*! I mean, the math is THERE, people, the math is THERE! **BEST SONG:** "Debby Merci" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Rosbeef Attack" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** I met Iwan. —Rev. Nørb (Dionysus)

THESE LIES: *More Than They'll Ever Know*: CD

This is some nice, snotty young street punk from Massachusetts. It's only seven songs, hence the "Pay no more than \$5.99" warning written almost bigger than the band's name on the cover, which is a nice touch. Musically, it's pretty standard mohawk-and-bulletbelt fare. I hear a little oi in there too. The vocals are fuckin' awesome. They kinda make this record, which could've used less fancy production if you ask me. I like this, but I think with a few minor changes I could love it. Oh, and the last song just straight up sounds like Rancid. There's even a picture of them driving around in an old car and everything. —Ben Snakepit (Rodent Popsicle)

THREE MINUTE MOVIE/ ANNALISE: *Split*: 7"

Three Minute Movie are my favorite Snuffy Smile band. They take the best of Leatherface and the Replacements, run it through their Firestarter filters, and come out with two more gems on one side of this slab. Annalise have a tough act to follow, but they're up to the task. Their two songs are interesting: the vocals sound like an oi band but the music is more melodic hardcore and the wild drums damn near steal the show. Put it all together and the songs shouldn't work at all, but strangely, they rock. —Sean (Snuffy Smile)

TOKYO ELECTRON: *Will Put a Charge in You*: 7"

More of a chunky garage sound than Ryan Wong's other genius output as Destruction Unit, and closer to the D Unit 7" than the full-length. Catchy, loud, and fun. A great addition to your Reatard completist collection, of which I can't get enough. —Speedway Randy (Shattered, www.geocities.com/shatteredreds)

TOM FOOLERY AND THE MISTAKES:

Fatter of Mact: CD
Ooh, not good. Kind of expected zany, but got boring college... oh shit, is that a vibraphone?! Yeah. —Megan (Colossal Thumb)

TRACK THE CURSE:

The New Land: CD
Death metal mayhem from Sam Williams III (Down By Law, Pseudo Heroes), Paul Pavlovich (ex-Assuck),

TJ Weeks, and the mysterious Sinestro. This release tunes up with an instrumental entitled "Trudge of the Dammed" that would sound perfect on a *Land of the Lost* episode. "Dim Enclosure" (first heard on the *Global Probing* compilation) rocks—hard. Sam and Paul trade off vocals on most tracks. Two songs feature co-vocals: "Serpentine City" and "Undividual." Not all the tunes are full-on thrash, however. "Mannequin" and "Empty Man" sound like roughed up Pseudo Heroes songs. There are even some pleasant keyboard flourishes that Monty Oxymoron would love. Each song is bolstered by the potent one-two punch of the rhythm section. Fans of Killing Joke or Slayer should seek this out and glue it to your windshield so mere mortals will fear Track The Curse. —Sean Koepenick (Spins Good/1-2-3)

TREIOPS TREYFID:

Feelings of Unreality: CD

Third solo release from ex-member of DC art rockers Pitchblende. Definitely out of the ordinary—each song sometimes sounds like a different artist. But somehow it all holds together with excellent results. "What Can I Do But Continue" reminds me of Magazine at their peak as Treiops sings about his life falling apart—"Guano building up on the bathroom sill/bats flying round my apartment/mice in the broiler pan." "Her Stories Wrote Themselves" is a slow, meditative song that features some nice guitar strumming with some bongos in the background. This is about a dream the singer had and Mark Harmon shows up. Pretty scary! "Rolling Blackout" is a cool song that for some reason sounds like a cross between Peter Murphy and early (good) Lou Reed. Treiops sings in the chorus, "Which big band do you believe in?/The alternate path I go down and down again/walking towards the door/many years ago it was so old." *Feelings of Unreality* is a challenging, remarkably innovative work that begs repeated playbacks for everything to sink into your cranium. Once it's there it won't be easily dislodged. Especially track nine. —Sean Koepenick (Postfact)

TYRADES:

On Your Video: 7"

Don't the Tyrades have three albums worth of singles now? Fuck CDs. One of the few bands putting out songs today you would mistake for the old glory days. Maybe we're in the good old days now. Jenny Tyrade for mayor. —Speedway Randy (SmartGuy)

U. UTAH PHILLIPS:

Starlight on the Rails:

A Songbook: CD

This is a small sample of the huge collection AK Press is putting together. When fully released, it's going to be four CDs and a booklet. And almost forty bucks. I like Utah Phillips, and

it's interesting to hear the explanations before each song, but for repeated listening, the format of explanation followed by song gets tedious and would work better separated onto separate disks so you can enjoy the music alone. —Megan (AK Press)

ULTRAMAN: *The Constant Weight of Zero*: CD

In the spirit of full disclosure, Tim Jamison, the lead singer of Ultraman, has written columns for razorcake.com, I've skated with him when he's flown out from St. Louis, and, yeah, there's bias. Ultraman's been around since the days of Black Flag, owes equal measure to the first wave of American hardcore (Flag of Democracy, Minor Threat) and the second wave of more melodic hardcore (Bad Religion, Sick Of It All). It's not a rote transcription; more of a long distillation and coming to healthy grips of being a much older band with a different worldview: naiveté hardening into the pragmatic determination of families, kids, houses, and getting old while still believing in punk, that type of thing. Much like The Crowd's *Punk Off*, and The Descendents' *Cool to Be You*, the band forges a new chapter instead of trying to merely re-tool or just revisit previous successes. There are several standout tracks, like "Decision" and "Fall," that are so good that you can't help thinking that if the roulette of time and place was different that these guys would be on the tip of more folks' tongues. That said, the CD's extremely generous in that there's thirteen new tracks, plus five tracks from a previous band (of which all members of Ultraman were in at one time or another), and video footage. Glad to have this in my collection. —Todd (New Red Archives)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Gnarly Dude 2: CD

Considering many of the bands' obsession with a certain kind of board with little wheels attached, I'm guessin' this is a skater punk comp. Most of the stuff on it ain't particularly interesting, with liberal doses of modern metal and techno splattered here and there, but it was nice to see the name McRad on a comp once more and hear the Faction's "Skate and Destroy" again, even if they are identified here as "The Fraction." In short, "eh" is about all I'm able to muster from this. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.voltagerecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *How's My Driving? Volume 2*: CD

I really hate to review compilations now. I really don't know why I picked this up. You have to go through track after track of songs that usually doesn't represent the band at its best or like this comp, you get a bunch of already released songs. So what is here for you music fiends out there? Names I recognized are The Cliftons, The Eddie Haskell, China White (not

Danger Zone period), Texas Thieves, The Lincolns, The Forgotten and The Faction. That's a lot of "the's" to deal with. If you have records by these bands, chances are you already have these tracks. —Donofthead (Super Speedway)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Just Go Destroy Everything in Sight*: CD

This is touted as the best of Japanese garage and punk. You like Japanese? You like the punk rock? Go buy something from Snuffy Smile instead. You seriously can't go wrong. There is a cover of Radio Birdman's "New Race," but they credit it as a New Race song instead. Meh. —Megan (Dionysus)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Power for Passion: CD

This subheading on this states that it contains "power pop 1978-85." Although by my reckoning most of the stuff is more punk than power pop, there are some real gems here sure to please fans from both camps, including tracks by The Reducers, Stratford Survivors, The Nips (not to be confused with the later Nipple Erectors lineup, who took the name whilst trying to garner more "respectability" before Shane went on to fame and cirrhosis with the Pogues), Matchheads, The Reactors, The Reducers, The Headaches, The Silencers (a post-Shock/pre-Legal Weapon band from LA who, in my LA-centric worldview, provide the best track here, "Boysfriends/Girlfriends"), The Ejectors, The Foreign Objects, Butch Minds the Baby, TV Neats (featuring future PBS-TV chef Ric Orlando), and Dennis Most. In all, a good listen, although some better liner notes would've been icing on the cake. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dionysus)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Redefining Scenes 2: CD

Here's a spunky little comp with a lot of old and a little new. Stalwarts like DI, Channel 3, The Skulls, and Circle Jerks may be the glue that hold this together, but the newer bands are nothing to balk at either. In fact, Broken Bottles have got to be one of my favorite bands right now. All in all, a good label sampler that works well in the car on the way to the skatepark. —Ty Stranglehold (Finger; www.fingerrecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *The Bastards Can't Dance: A Tribute to Leatherface*: CD

As a member of the USFC, it's no secret that I love Leatherface. Broken heart? Things not right in the world? Completely happy and surrounded by friends? Leatherface is the perfect soundtrack to it all. Then you add Snuffy Smile to the mix. Yoichi is putting out some of the best stuff in the world right now, let alone Japan. With that said, I'm not



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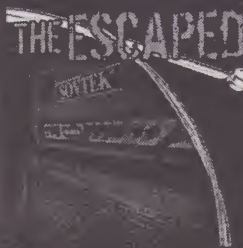
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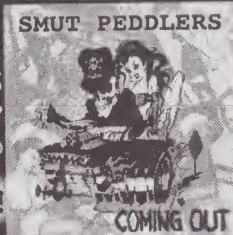
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fully excited about this. There are some great tracks on there (Spraypaint and The Because definitely surprised me), and I'm always happy to hear more from I Excuse. It isn't as strong in the middle, and, in the end, I'd rather either listen to each band's own stuff or to Leatherface. —Megan (Snuffy Smile)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *The Pop Punk Circus is Back in Town*: CD

Three-band comp here, with the Hunchbacks, the Waukees, and the Battledykes all vying for first place. Hailing from the UK, Italy, and Germany respectively, two points should be given to the label for giving us something that's at least geographically diverse. Unfortunately, that's where the diversity ends. The title of the comp is pretty telling. Three female fronted pop-punk bands singing songs about boys, cars, and more boys. For every lyrically smart, razor-sharp pop punk band (Discount, the Thumbs, and Rivethead come immediately to mind), there's four or five dozen fairly catchy but hopelessly vapid number-crunchers like these folks. I mean, "My Car Is So Cool"? "Gay Boyfriend"? Give me a break. It just gets to the point where the sweetness is cloying, you know? —Keith Rosson (All-Nite)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *To Live and Die in Tampa Bay*: CD

Let's face facts. The day that bigger record companies fucked with the lexicon and crossed the wires of "label sampler" and "compilation," the land of comps has been a dicey affair of aural piss, not-so-exclusive songs, and cast-offs from larger name bands to pad the roster. The three gleaming examples that buck that trend in recent years are the invaluable Hostage, Dirtnap, and Geykido comps. Remember the time of yore when you were looking to find a handful of good bands to check out all in one convenient package? ADD delivers. Like purgatory, there are many levels on which to judge a comp. The first, and lowest, is if it was on the radio, would you even to listen to it or would you rather just sit in silence? (These are called samplers. They are free or cheap for a reason.) The second level is like listening to the radio played by a DJ with their head up their ass, but licks into one or two good songs an hour. You still have to suffer through commercials and musical moodswings that cover death-metal, ska, and emo. The third level is going to an unfamiliar bar and a jukebox is playing. There aren't blatant commercials, but you still run into Jimmy Buffet and The Steve Miller Band, although there might be a Clash or Ramones CD to chose from and squeak in when the locals let you. The fourth level is going into a bar you like, are familiar with, and a friend who knows the songs by heart has already fed the jukebox for an hour's worth of music and you're digging it

eighty to ninety percent of the time. Songs you didn't know grow on you. Bands you've never heard of kick some major ass. Bands you like submit A+ material. And this is where this Tampa comp resides. Excellent bands that I already like (The Tim Version, Vagina Sore Jr., Claimmel) provide exclusive tracks, bands I've never heard (Super Power Abuse, Flat Stanley, and The Rogue Set) don't slack, and bands I haven't been too up on the past (The Dukes of Hillsborough) sound right on track. If you're in the mood for gruff, melodic, powerful punk that's as sweaty as it is earnest and don't know where to turn, give this one a listen. Oh, and there is a fifth level to comps, one that'll never be topped: the one you make yourself and give to a friend. That's how this idea started. —Todd (ADD)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Vancouver Complication: CD

The late '70s punk scene in and around Vancouver, British Columbia is my favorite regional scene from that time period. Along with Boston, MA, the Vancouver scene had a lot of different sounding bands and an incredible amount of activity for a city outside the big three of Los Angeles, London, and New York. The percentage of amazing bands is just phenomenal. Now, thanks to Joey Shithead and Sudden Death, you can hear it for yourself. This compilation is an absolute c-l-a-s-s-i-c! There is no better collection of songs from the 1977 to 1979 punk era. From the proto hardcore of Subhumans and D.O.A. (two songs apiece here) to the straight-ahead punk of the Dishrags and K-Tels (aka Young Canadians), to the new wave weirdness of U-J3RK5 (Ujerk), Private School, Exxotone, No Fun, and Shades, there is an astounding amount of great music here. While my beloved Modernettes were just a little late to make the cut (starting up in 1979 and not releasing anything until 1980) the power pop sounds are in abundance with the genius Pointed Sticks and the great Active Dog (featuring Buck Cherry of Modernettes on guitar). This reissue has included a reprint of the original booklet that came with the first pressing of the LP as well as some great liner notes and a listing of all band members. There are also five bonus tracks on the end, including a fantastic Dishrags tune. Now if Sudden Death would only reissue the Modernettes full length... actually, I heard there was a Modernettes collection CD in the works, so let's hope. Get on the Vancouver punk train right here! —Mike Frame (Sudden Death)

VICIOUS CYCLE:

Self-titled: CD

A bar band that failed to make me rock but succeeded in making me want to drink. Heavily.
—Jimmy Alvarado
(www.viciouscycleroad.com)

VIS VIRES:

Inside the Hate: CD

Man, I just got taken back to the metal

scene circa late '80s. Their singer has that operatic tone with a band that sounds like early Anthrax with the singer from the Darkness. If this guy could sing in key consistently, it would be a great gift to one of my metal dinosaur friends.

—Donofthedeard
(Vis Virus, <www.visvires.net>)

VIVISUK:

US Disastwhore: 7" EP

Crusty hardcore, dual female/male vocals, thrashy beats. You know the drill. Would've been considerably more impressed if they had gone for more originality by including a tuba player. —Jimmy Alvarado
(Bacon Town)

VOID CONTROL/

THE SCARRED: Split 7"

Void Control: I like the strangled, spitting quality of Void Control. They're starting to understand and harness that sketchy, pop-hardcore, driven force that made the Zero Boys and The Freeze so great. They understand the benefit of keeping sharp edges on songs, where melody doesn't get dulled by speed, yet keeping the middle gruff, interesting, and explosive. Cool stuff. The Scarred: Need to learn how to stop a song. There's no need to repeat the chorus fifteen times on either of the songs. Studded belts and mohawks reign supreme, their love of the Sex Pistols is transparent, and although they have snatches of New Beach Alliance sounds (Smogtown, Crowd, Smut Peddlers), they're not up to that standard. They sound too pat, lockstep, and repetitive. There's no nihilism, no tumors, no glorious wipeouts, and no radiation in the songs themselves. Their hearts seem in the right places, but, sorry, no dice. —Todd (Puke'n' Vomit)

VOLT: *Self-titled*: 12" single

Take three of the Splash Four and lock them in studio. Add copious amounts of industrial, proto, mechanized, lo-fi electronic musical equipment. Throw in some glamorized (Okay, I imagine them... maybe?) drugs, alcohol and sex. Volt is born. From the thirty-six chambers of Paris, France hail three musical misfits with a rap sheet long and impressive enough to send any hardened musical criminal packing their bags for their mother's house in Toledo. This is a 12" EP tour de force of minimalism, confronting, and then copulating with rock'n'roll excess. Peel off your blinders and see the world as a corrupt and morally subjugated realm of pure filth and disease, just as Volt numbers like "Sex Five Nun" and "Testbild" might suggest. Suicide, Neu!, Einstürzende Neubaten, and Swans weigh heavy on this record. —Miss Namella J. Kim
(In the Red)

WILLOWZ: *Are Coming*: CD

At one point in time, this band interested me a great deal with their ability to seemingly supernaturally trans-

port me back in time to the golden days of Beach Punk™, but, at this new, later point in time, they have managed to disinterest me a similarly great deal with their ability to put the same songs on like three records in a row. Would I feel this way if they weren't starting to remind me of *Surrealistic Pillow*-era Jefferson Airplane mooshed around with equal parts Redd Kross? Does it matter? As far as I'm concerned, they can change the album title to *Have Gone* and be done with it. BEST SONG: The one on the first single. BEST SONG TITLE: Band is hereby disqualified from having a best song title if it's going to be the same thing three records in a row. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This album contains drawings of naked ladies. —Rev. Nørb (Sympathy)

WITH OR WITHOUT YOU:

Six Reasons to Drop Out: CD

"I don't care/what you think/of this band or me/I've got a real life/friends and family." Good. I hope they like pretty standard, in-your-face, non-impressive hardcore. Bonus: may or may not be named after a U2 song! —Megan (Martyr)

YOUTH GONE MAD/

ONE WAY DOWN: Split 7"

Youth Gone Mad's side isn't very good. This band has been around for fuckin' ever, so you gotta cut 'em some slack. It's not good, but it's not totally shitty either. Pretty standard poppy punk that kinda sounds like it's trying to sound like the Vindictives, but not quite hitting the mark. One Way Down I've never heard of, and there's a reason why. Whew! This shit stinks like the toilet on a morning after Fifty Cent Wing Night with a pitcher of High Life. Crappy, wanky bar rock that sounds like a bunch of dudes hanging out in Guitar Center. This record is bad. Avoid it. —Ben Snakepit (Aboverecords.com)

YUPPIE PRICKS:

Brokers Banquet: CD

Wild, sloppy, out of control punk rock that will make you reflect on life's complexities (once you stop laughing, that is). No one is safe from the pricks unbridled fury. The Governorator gets skewered on "Hummer in My Hummer" and how can you go wrong with lines like this from "Rich Bitch"—"if you can't at least afford Gucci/you'll get snubbed more than Susan Lucci." Other weighty topics include sex, drugs, rich fat cats, and more sex. Sometimes the vocals veer a little too close to Jello Biafra territory. But that seems to be okay since it's on his label and he even does a guest vocal on "Damn It Feels Good to be a Yuppie." "New Rolls" will probably sound fairly familiar to you, too. The Yuppie Pricks are passing the champagne over, so drink up.
—Sean Koepenick
(Alternative Tentacles)



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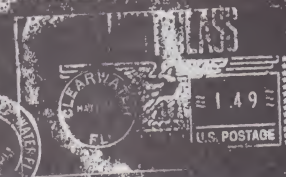
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- **Town Clock**, PO Box 132, Thirsk, YO7 1WR, England
- **Tragic End**, PO Box 30248, Middleburg Hts., OH 44130
- **Unholy Resurrection**, 136 Ridgewood Dr, Syracuse, NY 13206
- **Valiant Death**, 3337 Poplar Dr., Smithfield, VA. 23430
- **Vinyl Warning**, PO Box 2991, Portland, OR 97208-2991
- **Voodoo Rhythm**, Jurastrasse 15, 3013 Bern, Switzerland
- **Waking**, 1803 Riverside Dr. #5M, NY, NY 10034
- **Wantage USA**, PO Box 8681, Missoula, MT 59807
- **Yep Roc**, PO Box 4821, Chapel Hill, NC 27515
- **Zaxxon Virile Action**, C.P. 1218, Sorel-Tracy, Quebec, Canada J3P 7L5
- **Zurich Chainsaw Massacre**, c/o Josef Loderer, Wasgenring 60, CH-4055 Basel, Switzerland



Send all zines for review to Razorcake, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042. Please include a contact address, the number of pages, the price, and whether or not you accept trades.

AFTERMATH #1, \$5, 8 1/2 x 11, photocopied, 27 pgs.

There really is something to be said for timeliness. *Aftermath* is a chronicle of events following 9/11, intercepted with questions about foreign policy and the decisions of the presidential administration. When did that happen? Four years ago? Even though many of the critiques included have been repeated, there are some interesting stories about the aftermath that haven't received much press. The second half is poetry, which wasn't that impressive save for the few short ditties like "DUBYA," which reads, "He likes to see you biting/ Those red white and blue pillows/ War whore." But it's still poetry, so I can't justify it much. —Amy Adoyzie (Shannon Colebank, Whizzbanger Productions, PO Box 5591, Portland, OR 97228)

AMERICA? #13, \$1, 4 1/4 x 5 1/2, photocopied, 48 pgs.

It's another love letter to Gainesville, signed affectionately from Travis. It's a sweet note he left on the handlebars of his bike, as he writes about riding around town on two wheels like it was a dream on Earth. Accompanied by interviews with Sam McPheeters of Wrangler Brutes (or more memorably, Born Against), zine distro maven, Mary, and J Church's Lance Hahn. If you've liked *America?* before, you'll still like it now. —Amy Adoyzie (Travis, PO Box 13077, Gainesville, FL 32604)

ARTCORE #22, 8 1/2 x 11, 36 pgs.

Artcore's a long-running labor of love out of England. Welly is unique in the sense that he's an older guy who combines reverent looks at the past with a healthy love for the present state of underground punk rock, when the most common stance is that everything used to be better and new bands aren't doing anything original. For that alone, my hat's off to the guy. He's also among the dwindling number of people who haven't "moved on" from punk rock to something else, as evidenced by his fine taste in current bands: Fucked Up, Vitamin X, and Signal Lost, among others. My favorite part is usually the articles about bands that would otherwise be

lost to history, bands like Social Unrest or Negazione that might not have gotten covered in the *Trouser Press Record Guide* and are therefore harder to dig up information about. He's also got a sense of humor about the whole thing and a great eye for layout. The only caveat would be that the text is a bit small, which might bother some people. But all in all, good stuff. —Josh (Welly, 1 Aberdulais Rd., Gabalfa, Cardiff, CF14 2PH, Wales, UK)

BROKEN PENCIL, #27, \$4.95, 8 1/2 x 11, glossy cover, newsprint interior, 88 pgs.

Indie-lit magazine from Canada. A little too pretentious for my tastes, and way too focused on irony. There's an article on mock rock operas. Apparently, the music is so awful that it elicits laughter from the crowd, but then the reviewer (genius that he is) realized that this is ironic. So, the fact that you just paid a pretty hefty door charge to get into an arty venue and sat and listened to some god-awful music you wouldn't listen to if it was genuine is all worth it because it's ironic? That misses me. If the art is a critique of something bad, but mimics that badness, wouldn't it still be bad? I don't know, maybe I don't get art. I'd just rather go see something I know that I like without having to worry if they're making an ironic statement, or, on the flip side, if I think what you're representing is fucking crapola, then your presentation of such will be no less crapola to me. —Megan (Broken Pencil, PO Box 203 Stn P, Toronto, ON, M5S 2S7, Canada)

BURN COLLECTOR, #13, 5 1/2 x 6, cardstock cover, stapled, 104 pgs.

Burn Collector is basically a personal zine, which chronicles the life and times of its author Al Burian. He is a musician and an artist having played in Hellbender, Milemarker and Challenger, been a columnist for *Punk Planet* and a cartoonist. With #13, Burian does his best dharma bum as he hopscoches across Europe after attending a family reunion in Germany. On the way, we get commentary on how you could be struck

down dead by a car at any moment (especially in Chicago), the irony of flying Kuwait Airlines, meeting a kindred spirit in Italy, and more minutia detailed than a Mike Daily novel. He's like a cross between Garrison Keillor and David Sedaris caught on tape during a late night television interview with a second rate Dennis Miller/ Jon Stewart host: Burian is well read, makes astute observations and provides generally a engaging read. But when he talks about how "little he has to show for his life" besides a handful of albums, over a dozen issues of this zine, and being able to aimlessly travel through Europe, I just want him to spend a few days in my world. The grass is always greener. Sure I got a wife and a house and a couple of kids and a tree house and a vasectomy and two cars and a couple of BMX bikes and some skateboards and a whole lot of records, but damn, I sure would like to ditch all that responsibility for a few months and do a band and/or zine tour. Oh, and I would like to say the size and shape of *Burn Collector* is perfect—ideal for subways, bus rides and bathrooms. —Greg Barbera (Al Burian, 307 Blueridge Rd., Carrboro, NC 27510)

CHUMPZINE #176,

free/stamp/trade, 5 1/2 x 4 1/2, photocopied, 8 pgs.

Eight tiny pages of cribbed cursive with no pictures? I see why it's called *Chumpzine*; I felt like a real chump squinting at it and trying to make sense of these contextless diary entries. Thanks dudes, I just about broke my eyes on this shit. Worth the eyestrain if you wanna know how some public school teacher fared in his efforts to do something regarding a Bookmobile. Gripping stuff. I am very confused. —Brian Howe (PO Box 27, Annville, PA 17003-0027)

CITIZINE, #7, \$3.25, 8 1/2 x 11, glossy black and white cover, 44 pgs.

The print version of *Citizine* is a compilation of reviews, interviews and other articles previously published through their website, citizinemag.com. This issue contains interviews with John Denney of L.A.'s Weirdos, Joey "Shithead"

Keithley of D.O.A., and Kira Roessler, former bassist for Black Flag. There are a ton of CD reviews, as well as a few political commentary columns, some poetry, and some original artwork. Well-written, professionally laid out. —Brian Mosher (T. Dubbs Enterprises, 2513 W. 4th St., LA, CA 90057)

CULTURE BOMB #1, free, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 20 pgs.

Ah, hand-drawn suburban teenaged anarchy. What could be sweeter? There's some annoying "I'll criticize myself, therefore nullifying any criticism you might level against me because I've already done so" copping out, but that's par for course for sixteen-year-olds (my advice—say what you mean, kids, don't hedge your bets). But he actually has a sense of humor and throws a few curveballs. A punk kid who ironically likes Jay-Z and Nelly McKay? I detect a budding hipster who, unbeknownst to him, is about a year away from outgrowing "HXC" and discovering Pavement. For now, though, this kid needs a computer with an anarchy symbol key. Reading this zine is sort of nostalgic, taking you back to that time before you got jaded about music, when every generic band you heard sounded like a revelation because you hadn't heard the classic shit they were ripping off yet. What I learned from *Culture Bomb*: Bush sux and the mainstream music industry is hopelessly corrupt. Shocka! Seriously dude, one love: This is DIY culture in action, and the kids may still be romanticizing a pure punk rock past that never happened and couching everything in five layers of irony, but they're still alright. —Brian Howe (jebuslovesme555@hotmail.com)

DREAMS FROM HADES, stories by B. Alan Ellis, half size

This is the sort of thing that makes getting these envelopes full of zines from Todd worthwhile. Brilliantly written short stories about people living in the margins of society, living, dying, drinking, fighting, killing, and being killed. Not very many likable characters, but plenty of memorable ones. Reading this collection has re-inspired me to get my ass off the sofa and back into the desk chair in front of my computer to do some more writing of my own. I cannot urge you strongly enough to contact Mr. Ellis and get a copy of this collection, as well as anything else he has to offer. Brilliant. —Brian Mosher (House of Vlad Productions, 55 Brett Lane, Temple, GA 30179)

FLUKE #6, 3 stamps, trade or donation, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 28 pgs.

Remember when your mom got tired of all your shit taking up space in her spare room? Remember when she threatened to throw out all those precious 7"s you never listen to anymore, unless you got your ass out to her suburban paradise and haul it away? Remember when you stepped into

your old bedroom, hit a wall of nostalgia, and picked through every piece of paper from every dusty cardboard box? Remember that one box? The one with all the tattered and abused notebooks filled with your "poetry." Remember sitting down on the floor of your old bedroom, flipping through those pages and violently shaking your head in deep shame as you read all those shitty rhyming stanzas about being alone, being pissed at the world, and being sappy in love? Remember how it made you want to stick your own fingernail through your cornea? Remember how you decided *not* to compile all of those poems into a zine because that would just be mean to inundate the English language in such an underhanded way? Yeah, well, someone else did decide to do it. It's called *Fluke*. And it thought it would be a good idea to share this: "today i just stared at grey skies/ and watched grey pigeons fly/ the seagulls floated, blackbirds cried/ i lied there and thought of how part of me died." —Amy Adoyzie (415 N. Park Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719; flookone@yahoo.com)

FUCK & FIGHT, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 12 pgs.
Short story zine in the house! Well-written story of two teenage dudes and their mission to score. The illustrations are clean and look awesome too. Too bad it's a common story of "borrowing" little kids' bikes to pedal ten miles to the next down just to fingerbang some girl you wouldn't even want to fuck if you had a choice. I mean, we've all got those tales right? So, imagine one of those youth-fueled misadventures in twelve-point font. —Amy Adoyzie (R. Lee, PO Box 1421, Oshkosh, WI 54903)

FUNZILLA—MONSTER OF FUN, #2, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, 12 pgs.
Funzilla? More like UN-zilla! —Josh (amyadoyzie@gmail.com)

FUNZILLA—MONSTER OF FUN, #1, half size, photocopied, 12 pgs.
This is as DIY as it gets—hand drawn illustrations, what seems like typed text (as in, on a typewriter, not a computer), and one intentionally fuzzy black and white photograph. The premise is that the publisher is a sort of genetic anomaly, Funzilla, the monster of fun. It'll take you all of three minutes to read it from cover to cover, but that's okay. It's fun, and I hope there's a #2. —Brian Mosher (amyadoyzie@gmail.com)

GO METRIC #19, \$3, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 82 pgs.
On numerous occasions, I've said that I love *Go Metric*, and I think I've finally figured out why. It just seems like an old friend who you don't get to see very often, a friend whose musical taste closely, but doesn't exactly, match your own. When I read Mike's record reviews, I often find myself thinking, "That sounds pretty cool.

Maybe I should pick that up," even if he's reviewing something like the Minus 5. In another zine that he did, *The Uhaul Adventures*, he said something to the effect of, "People shouldn't have guilty pleasures when it comes to music because they shouldn't feel guilty about the music that they like," which always pops into my head when I read his reviews now. So yeah, reading *Go Metric* is like talking to an old friend that likes good indie rock, and if Mike Faloon says a record sounds like Archers of Loaf or Seaweed, I'm gonna fucking buy it, punk points be damned! Most likely my favorite zine ever. —Josh (Mike Faloon, 801 Eagles Ridge Rd., Brewster, NY 10509)

GO METRIC, #19, \$3, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 82 pgs.
Go Metric is consistently one of my two favorite zines coming out of New York. The other is *Zisk*, which also happens to be the brainchild of Mr. Mike Faloon, editor of *GM*. The music covered generally runs toward the poppier side, which I don't necessarily go in for without hesitation; however, it's all in the presentation. I read every issue cover to cover (and multiple times), including reviews of bands I'll probably never listen to willingly. Why? Because *GM* is one of the few zines out there that takes the time to do this little thing we in the business like to call research. It's what makes the difference between a "What are your influences?" interview and one that you'd actually want to read. They can even pull off email interviews, the most dreaded of all to a reader. *Go Metric* also isn't afraid to either alienate their readers or introduce them to something completely new through articles ranging from Bobby Darin's filmography, a plan to improve the WWE, and a Raymond Carver choose-your-own-adventure story. And that's all by page eight. Review-wise, they pack them in as well. And, for the most part, I'm almost always in complete agreement. Even if I don't like the band reviewed, I agree with how they're described, and can even understand why Mike (or the other two reviewers) stands behind an album. They put a small box around those reviews they particularly recommend, almost as if you circled the ones you wanted to pick up as you read through, but without the exertion of having to lift a pencil yourself. I was a little bit skeptical when I saw how many circles there were in this issue. Was Mike getting soft? On one page five reviews were circled, but then I looked at what they were: *The Snakepit Book* (book reviews are thrown in with records), *The Soviettes*, *The Starvations*, *The Sw!ms*, and *The Swing Ding Amigos*. Now, I've never heard *The Sw!ms*, but I swear by the other four, and I'd be damned if I wouldn't have circled them myself. Spot on. Don't consider your bathroom complete without at least one issue sitting bowlside. Your guests will thank you. —Megan (Mike

Faloon, 801 Eagles Ridge Rd., Brewster, NY 10509)

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL #262, \$4, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint
Get your fingers dirty as you thumb through this one featuring scene reports on Carbondale, Illinois (MOTO represent!), Indonesia (South East Asia in the house!), and Slovakia (kookie eastern Euros!). And then there are the interviews with Frantix, To What End?, The Armitage Shanks, The Wendy Kroys, and a billion more! Serious! Okay, maybe not a billion, but enough to last a few sittings on the toilet. Okay, now stop pretending like you don't know anything about *MRR* and go buy one and stop reading my crappy review. —Amy Adoyzie (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146-0760)

PLEASE KILL YOURSELF, #11, \$1, half size, photocopied
The articles in this zine are really pretty interesting. The theme of this issue seems to be "the worst of everything," including "The Absolute Worst Bands in Texas." There's also a quiz to determine whether or not you are a poodlecore loser, and an essay entitled "Die Pop Tarts, Die," which was some fun reading. Just be careful of the photographs. I was reading this on a crowded commuter train, and I thought the people sitting around me were going to grab it out of my hands and burn it right there on the train when they saw the picture of the guy fucking the four hundred pound woman, or of the hairy-assed guy with the hole cut out of his stretch pants to expose his half excreted log of shit. Definitely not for the queasy. —Brian Mosher (Please Kill Yourself, 630 E. 14th St., Houston, TX 77008)

PUNK ROCK CONFIDENTIAL, #1, \$3.95, 8 1/2 x 11, full color, 80 pgs.
Punk Rock Confidential is a new zine that is being put out by Fat Mike of NOFX. The zine is pretty fancy since the entire issue is in color. Thankfully, when reading this zine you will not get full of black smudges from the pages due to its expensive production. You will also not read too much, but instead peruse through a large amount of photos. There is only a little musical commentary and a couple of band pieces, such as a tour report from The Explosion. Some highlights of the zine: the section which documents who in the punk rock world is getting married, divorced, and popping out kids, such as Duane Peters and Corey Parks with their newborn, Clash Peters. A negative: So many ads, it's a little overwhelming; the zine is noticeably slated for Hot Topic consumption with ads for bands like Yellowcard. A positive: The "Ask Floyd" section (humorous responses to *Dear Abby*-type questions), band members and their pets section, and a section comprised of trading card-like photos of band members. *PRC* is a photo documentary of the punk lifestyle that will definitely keep short attention-spanned illiterate folks con-

tent. The magazine is a pleasant and quick read; but hopefully the next issue will be more diverse in music selections. —Jenny Moncayo (Punk Rock Confidential, 236 West Portal Ave. Suite 134, SF, CA 94127, www.punkrockcon.com)

RIOT 77 #8, 3 euros + postage, 8 1/4 x 10 3/4, offset print, glossy, 52 pgs.
Riot 77 has a lot in common with *Suburban Voice* and, if you know how much I like *Suburban Voice*, you know what a compliment that is. Where *SV* focuses mostly on American hardcore and punk, *Riot 77* has more of an of or first wave punk focus. Still, like *SV*, there's extensive, diary-like coverage of live shows from the zine's area. Cian and his partners go to a lot of shows, and they write about them in interesting ways. If nothing else, you get to find out how The Epoxies, Iggy Pop, Fleshes, and Against Me! were received in Dublin. Cian also does top notch interviews. His questions are well-researched, and he gets the best out of his subjects. Hell, he even drew me into a 7 Seconds interview, and I never thought I'd get drawn into one of those. This issue also has a lengthy interviews with Los Fastidios, Mark from Captain Oi!, and Dublin punk legends The Radiators. All three of these interviews are interesting, too, but the real standout was the Captain Oi! interview. Mark gives his perspective after twenty years at the heart of the British punk scene, covering everything from his days in The Business to his relentless attempt to keep all great British punk in print. What's cool about the interview is that Mark neither romanticizes nor criticizes. He comes off as honest and balanced, and though he's a bit grumpy at times, a jolt of optimism resonates in everything he says. This is my kind of zine. —Sean (Riot 77 c/o Cian Haynes, 31 St. Patricks Park, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Ireland; riot77magazine@hotmail.com)

SARKAFARKA #1, ?\$, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 70 pgs., comes with CD
Due to the fact that it's all in Polish, save for the Rhythm Chicken's English/Polish translations, it was a quick read. However, due to the fact that it covers a load of bands and people who I find interesting and inspirational, those who can read Polish will have a lot to celebrate. It includes interviews with Nørb (imagine how difficult that translation would be), Marked Men, Grabass Charlestons, Lost Sounds, Krunchies, Functional Blackouts, and columns by Todd Tricknee and Josh Rutledge. The accompanying CD has thirty-five tracks of great punk, too. The only big question mark I have is that there doesn't seem to be one Polish band interviewed or a Polish scene report. Here's to hoping that there's some raging punk rock in Poland so they can share with us something that's not

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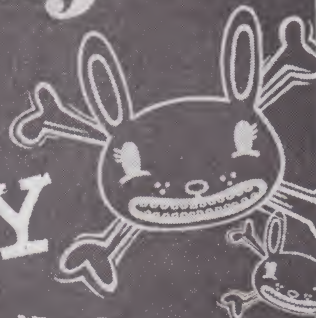
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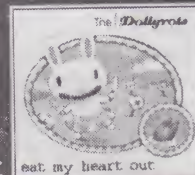
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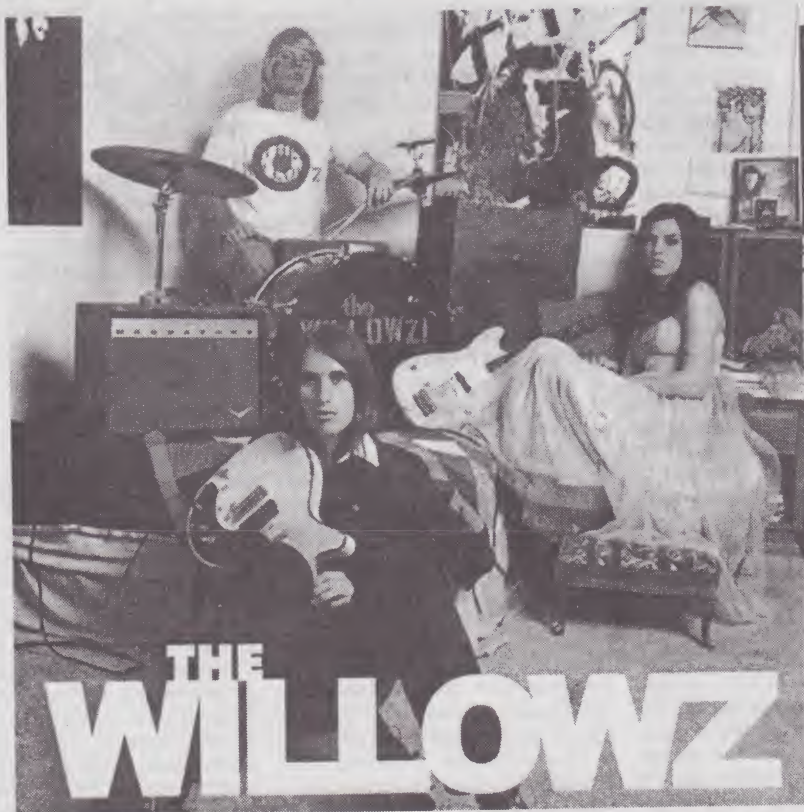
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American-born next time around. Excellent debut. —Todd (Wojtek Stasiak, PO Box 112, 09-400 Plock, Poland)

SUBURBAN WASTE, #1, \$1 or fair trade, half size, photocopied, 44 pgs. It would be easy to dismiss *Suburban Waste* #1 as the whining of a privileged white kid growing up in one of the richest parts of the world. But the writing and artwork are too good to allow me to do that. Plus, the writer acknowledges the fact of her relatively comfortable situation herself, but still feels angst-ridden and unfulfilled. This might be from the point of view of teenage girl from California, but there's still stuff here that an old guy from New England can relate to. Good stuff. —Brian Mosher (Jenn, PO Box 800757, Santa Clarita, CA 91380-0757)

TALES FROM THE CIRCLE PIT #1, \$1.50, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 26 pgs.

It's another one of those wide-eyed, optimistic, fist-in-the-air punk zines that make you long for the days when you actually lived by slogans like, "If the punks are united, then we'll never be divided." Sigh. Oh, to be so young and so goddamned naïve. *TFTCP* is probably one of the most unoriginal zines, harping on youth revolution and the fear of a dying scene. But everyone has to start somewhere, then evolve and produce more interesting

rant and critiques. My recommendation is to pick up *TFTCP* when issue #13 comes out. —Amy Aodyzie (Dallas McCluske, 1449 Hungry Hollow Rd., Leechburg, PA 15656)

TRYING ON HATS #1, 4 1/4 x 5 1/2, photocopied, 31 pgs.

The editor of this zine strikes me as someone who likes to talk for the sake of hearing her own voice. Jennifer D. Farley, who writes the majority of this zine, never lets you forget that Jennifer D. Farley is the author of much of this trite bullshit since she bylined thirteen pages with Jennifer D. Farley. The front cover says, "written by Jennifer D. Farley," and she autographed the back cover. I get it! You wrote the zine! Congrats! But maybe you ought to rethink printing your name on every other page, especially when you consider the content that it accompanies. Insights on rude coffee shop customers and people you "can do without" has been done by writers with more skillz. Jennifer D. Farley, can I ask you a question, are your letters to your friends so extremely interesting that you must excerpt them? No, they weren't. Listen, JD, can I call you that? JD, I bet you're actually a pretty cool human being, but sometimes human beings should show some restraint. Your writing isn't so bad, it's just boring. We're friends, right, JD? Well, friends don't let friends make asinine zines. So get better at this writing

thing or just stop altogether. —Amy Aodyzie (buffy2473@charter.net)

UNIVERSE CITY, #1, \$2.12, 8 1/2 x 11, bound, glossy cover, 212 pgs.

I don't know what to make of this fucking zine. What I can tell you is that it is NYC-based (hence the 212 references, as those said digits represent the city's area code) *Universe City* has the standard CD and zine reviews, band and eclectic people interviews, and, well, all kinds of other shit because it is a monster of a publication at two hundred plus pages. And I can tell you that they do possess that aesthetic of DIY: that feeling of kinship like they are people you could meet in an elevator or in the kitchen at a party and immediately warm up to. But Jesus Christ, the layout fucking eats some serious ass. I mean, I know it is a theme issue and all but that old school computer font that looks like your first LCD watch drove me batty and the wacky pieced-together design was downright distracting. It's as if the crew at *Razorcake* HQ punk'ed me and sent a zine from '91. I mean, who still has an AOL email account? Flabbergasted I am (well, I'll settle for stoned but either way: what the fuck?). —Greg Barbera (Gabe Walter, PO Box 668 NY, NY 10116)

US AGAINST THEM, #12, \$2 or trade, half size, photocopied, 28 pgs. Rantings, reviews, and an interview

with Cries of Pain Records' Matt Strong, all in a very DIY format, seemingly a photocopy of a photocopy of an original that might have gone through the laundry. Still, the writing is fairly strong, and the articles are interesting. Some DIY lifestyle hints, including directions to the ladies on how to make your own menstruation collection device. The author of this particular piece urges anyone who is able to take some time off from school or work once a month to "bleed free." Barring that, she hopes that you'll find a way to capture and re-use your menstrual blood—one suggestion she has is to pour it into your herb garden. Just don't invite me to dinner. —Brian Mosher (Mark, PMB 60, 595 W. Main St., Norwich, CT 06360)

ZINE WORLD #22, \$3. 8 1/2 x 11, offset, 63 pgs.

Whatever clichéd shit I have to say about *Zine World* would never justify how awesome of a resource and how massive of an undertaking this project is. It is more than an extensive compilation of zine reviews with news on the current state of government-sanctioned censorship and other legislation that effects the way we produce and receive information. Informative, well done, and should be sitting in your lap right this second. —Amy Aodyzie (PO Box 330156, Murfreesboro, TN 37133; www.undergroundpress.org)



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BOOK REVIEWS

Barefoot Gen: **A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima, Vol. 1** by Keiji Nakazawa, 284 pgs.

Keiji Nakazawa (author of this book and no relation to Drunken Master Kiyoshi Nakazawa) is a survivor of the atomic blast on Hiroshima. When the U.S. military dropped the bomb, Nakazawa just happened to be in the right spot, protected from the blast by a schoolhouse wall. His family wasn't so lucky. His little brother, older sister, and father were trapped under the collapsed roof of their house and burned to death in the resulting fires. Nakazawa's pregnant mother survived the blast, but had the horrific experience of trying to pry the roof off of her family, failing to do so, then leaving her family under the roof to be burned to death when the fires got too close. Nakazawa's mother and the baby she carried didn't live long after the blast. Nakazawa dealt with the pain and anger of all this by drawing comics. It took him quite a bit of time to finally get around to writing about the events of the atomic blast. In 1972, he started telling the story of the end of World War II in Japan. *Barefoot Gen, Vol. 1* is the English translation of that 1972 graphic novel. I have to admit that I was hesitant to pick this book up. The subject matter is just so heavy that I thought the book would weigh me down. I have to give credit to Nakazawa, though. He manages to keep the weight of the events in the background and tell a human and, at times, funny story. It's all told through the eyes of Gen, an mischievous boy and clearly Nakazawa's alter ego. Gen is a trouble maker, has a quick temper, but, at the core, is a kindhearted kid. His father, modeled after Nakazawa's father, is also quick-tempered and at times violent, but he's adamantly opposed to Japan's actions in World War II. His outspoken anti-war beliefs land him in jail for a few days, and Gen and his siblings are ridiculed relentlessly by classmates, teachers, and neighbors for Gen's father's beliefs. The story is brutally honest. It's impossible not to get drawn in. I found myself

reading the book more and more slowly, partly because I wanted to enjoy the complexity of it (it's so much more than an anti-nuclear weapon book), partly because the illustrations are beautiful, and partly because I knew how it was going to end (August 6, 1945 always looms in the not-too-distant future) and I didn't want to get to the ending. *Barefoot Gen* is an excellent book. When you consider that the U.S. president has repeatedly pushed for a "nuclear option" and a way of fighting a winnable nuclear war, this book couldn't be more timely. And, on a personal note, I really hope that Last Gasp reads this review and sends me *Barefoot Gen, Volume 2*. —Sean (Last Gasp, 777 Florida St., SF, CA 94110)

Buddy Does Seattle by Peter Bagge, 340 pgs.

As soon as I ripped open the envelope this book came in, I knew I was in for a treat. I have long been a reader of Mr. Bagge's hilarious comic, *Hate*, so I was already intimately familiar with Buddy Bradley and his "Generation X"-ploits. This collection of Buddy's Seattle saga is an awesome read, even if this is the first time you've ever read any of Bagge's comics. It stands alone as a frighteningly real, embarrassingly true, and unabashedly profane look into a lifestyle that most of us have lived (and some are still living) through. Here are all the characters from our wasted youth, the good-for-nothing schemer best friend, the weird and reclusive roommate, the slutty why-the-hell-do-I-put-up-with-you girlfriend, and the hard-drinkin' no-nonsense jerk, and behind them all, the disposable culture of the 1990s. The stories are set in Seattle, at the time when "grunge" was emerging as the music of choice (and a way to make a fast buck), when a band could make a name for itself as long as there was at least one "Kurt" onboard, but the stories are written with such humorous and painful insight that they could have happened anywhere. As I read this, I wondered if Mr. Bagge was a fly on the

wall on many of my fucked-up schemes, all-night benders, and broken relationships. If you're a fan of Peter Bagge's work, I recommend you pick this up. If you've *never* read any of Bagge's comics, I implore you to get this book as soon as possible. You won't be disappointed. —Art F. (Fantagraphics, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115)

The Comics Go to Hell: **A Visual History of the Devil in Comics** by Fredrik Strömberg, 320 pages

I have to admit I was expecting a book highly devoted to Coop when I found this on my desk. I couldn't have been farther from the truth. Strömberg never falters from his focus on comics, which automatically excludes Coop. Comics of all varieties, from religious to Disney, and written in as many languages are included. He examines how the devil (or devil-like characters) run a common thread through many belief systems that, on first glance, seem to have little to do with one another. The format of the small book (it's about 4"x4"), is a comic panel on the left-hand page with an accompanying explanation on the right page, which led me to believe that it would be a quick read. Again, I was fooled. It reads like a dissertation rather than an interested examination of his topic. Everything is overly academic, which could be seen as admirable by some, but not me. I think that the majority of those who would be interested in this aren't looking to sift through all of the academia for a small interesting fact every twenty or so pages. Strömberg writes a large portion assuming that the reader is pretty familiar with both Dante and Virgil, which I don't see as a reasonable assumption for the laydude who's just interested in either comics or the devil. There are high points (like seeing how different factions of Disney deal differently with the devil or how a Danish cartoonist, Peter Madsen, depicts the devil as an evil-looking Jesus). On the whole, I learned more about Christian lore than solely about the Devil, which only makes sense when you really think about it. —Megan (Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115)

The Gruesome Acts of Capitalism by David Lester, introduction by Jean Smith

Marketed as the "Harper's Index of the havoc to humanity and the environment caused by global economic inequality," *The Gruesome Acts of Capitalism* reads like any other list of facts. But facts in and of themselves are subjective in their interpretation. As with following exchange I had with my Dad.

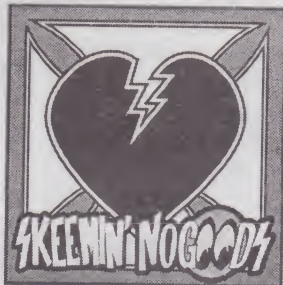
Me (reading from page 59): Hey Dad, did you know "the U.S. defense budget in 2004 will be \$1 billion a day?"

Dad: It's a good thing Bush won. He'll be sure to double that.

Me: Touché.

As the table of contents states, the chapters are "divided by the names of historical figures whose struggles against inequalities are fitting reminders of what is possible." Unfortunately, boiling down the lives of people like Emma Goldman and Louise Michel to a simple sentence or two hardly seems fair to the individual or the reader. Rudolph Rocker doesn't even merit a complete sentence: "Bookbinder, editor of the Yiddish newspaper (*Arbeiter Freund*), labour organizer, theorist on Syndicalism."

Staring down on some of these pages only adds to the sense of helplessness anyone concerned about the well being of others may feel. ("In India, it is estimated that more than 5,000 women are killed each year because their in-laws consider their



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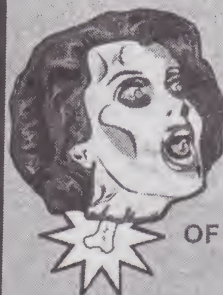
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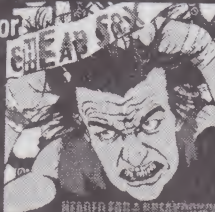
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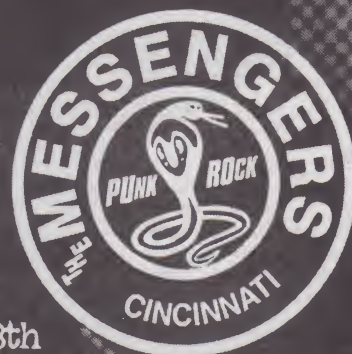
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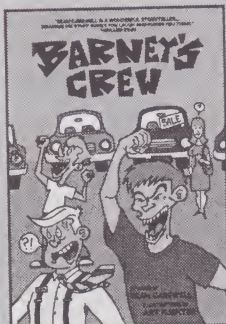
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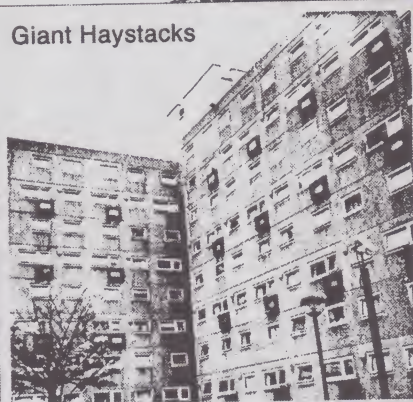
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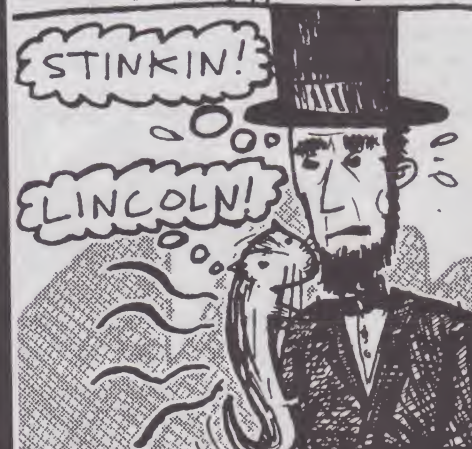
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dowries inadequate.” What the fuck am I supposed to do with that?) David Lester does, however, end his book with a listing of websites and organizations where you can find information of fighting back. (www.responsibleshopper.org is invaluable to anyone who is careful about who they give their money to.)

While by no means perfect, all of the book’s royalties do go to the Canadian Centre for the Victims of Torture. It would be well worth the ten dollars to leave a copy on the back of my old man’s toilet tank. He might even learn something. If nothing else, reading that Tom Cruise reportedly made \$75 million for *Mission: Impossible 2* will keep him regular. —Chris Devlin (Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 201E-121 Osborne St., Winnipeg, MB, R3L 1Y4 Canada)

Musical Legends

by Justin Green, 112 pgs.

I was reading this book on a plane and the woman next to me wouldn’t quit reading over my shoulder. The first couple of times I looked in her direction, she tried to act like she wasn’t reading the book. The third time I caught her, she asked me questions about the book: where I got it, what it was all about, etc. The fourth time I caught her, I said, “Would you like to borrow this for the rest of the flight?” She said, “Yes,” and I had to find something else to read. I guess that’s a pretty good recommendation for how engaging this book is. It collects roughly one hundred, one-page comics about musicians from various genres and time periods. Justin Green has obviously done his research, and he fills you in on interesting facts about people you didn’t think you cared about: like when he talks about the time when Harry Belafonte wasn’t allowed to touch Petula Clark on TV because prevailing standards wouldn’t let a black man touch a white woman. Or when you learn about Del Shannon quitting drinking and taking prozac in an attempt to clean up his life so that he could join the Travelling Wilburys (the prozac didn’t work; Shannon killed himself). Or when you learn about Joe Venuti, who one time offered to take requests from the audience, and when a woman requested he play, “Feelings,” Venuti berated the woman, saying that “Feelings” was “the worst goddamn song I ever heard.” Or when you learn about band leader Fats Waller breaking the color line in major league baseball by playing a couple of songs at Yankee Stadium, as per Babe Ruth’s request. There are tons of little tidbits like that in this book. Justin Green has a knack for drawing me into the lives of musicians that I wouldn’t ordinarily pay the least bit of attention to. More than half of the comics are in full color, and this book can keep you interested through nearly four months of bathroom visits. —Sean (Last Gasp, 777 Florida St., SF, CA 94110)

Muzzlers, Guzzlers, and Good Yeggs

by Joe Coleman, 166 pgs.

This is a little hard-bound pocketbook that I easily finished on the train in a day. It does a great job of editing down and condensing the meat of long, interesting stories. (I had previously read the great books put out by AK Press, Jack Black’s *You Can’t Win* and Ben Reitman’s telling of Boxcar Bertha in *Sister of the Road*, which are highly recommended in their own right.) That’s only half of what the book’s about. The other half is the illustrations. And just as the non-fiction of bum life, serial killer life, and life at the bottom of society’s spittoon are unraveled

in words, there are unflinching illustrations almost every other page. Most of the people drawn look like they’ve been placed in a whirling blender, bled dry, then sewn back up by a hack doctor and thrown back on the street, allowing the virus of low society to further consume them in boils and rashes. It’s not pretty, but it’s honest, and it’s hard not to stare. What fascinated me was the story of Carl Panzram. When he says, “My intention was to kill everyone and anyone I could,” the dude was on a mission that didn’t end with sodomizing and killing twelve-year-olds. He tells a story of setting off bombs in a train tunnel, which would not only derail a train but also set off pre-positioned poison gas canisters, and he’d sit at the mouth of the tunnel, shooting whoever tried to escape. So, if you’re looking for a mauve Hello Kitty book to complement the cantaloupe colored one, this book probably wouldn’t be a good choice (as a matter of fact, it’d probably rape Hello Kitty, maybe kill her). If you don’t mind grit and true stories replete with hookers, murderers, con men, and sycophants, all illustrated, this is darn good bet. —Todd (Fantagraphics, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115)

The Pin-Up Art of Dan DeCarlo

by Alex Chun & Jacob Covey, 216 pgs.

Dan DeCarlo was/is to Archie Comics what Jack Kirby was to superheroes or Carl Barks was to Donald Duck: *THEE* undisputed quintessential guy; the King; the be-all and end-all, forever and ever, amen. DeCarlo’s style was/is so endemic to Archie-ness that i don’t think i even ever realized that it was just one guy drawing all those stories year after year, i kinda just thought that that was the way “they” drew them, sorta like with Disney stuff or something. This book collects the best of his work for the *Humorama* line of digest-sized men’s magazines from the ‘50s and early ‘60s, and it is magnificent on a number of levels. First off, there’s *The Chicks*. Imagine 216 pages worth of faux-raunchy cartoons, one to a page, all featuring one or more impossible dolls manufactured from the same die as Veronica Lodge, but a few years older, a lot bigger boobs, and a lot more skin. *Just Imagine!* The girls of Riverdale, a year or two removed from Mr. Weatherbee and Miss Grundy’s domain, now dancing in fishnets and pasties; being undressed, willingly or otherwise, by lecherous old codgers; bent over and spanked. I’d be a little “hard” pressed to think of one good reason why that don’t rock, if ya get my drift. Secondly, there’s *The Guys*: Drawn one level more “cartoony” than the girls, they’re obviously not the material’s selling point, yet each and every one of these perverted Mr. Lodge-ass bastards are really wonderful examples of cartooning, if you’re into that sort of thing. Thirdly, there are the captions themselves: Sometimes, the one-liners actually sort of work as gags (“What’s with Louie? I’ve never known him to take so long to pick a pocket!”); usually, they serve better as unintentionally amusing insights into, as the book’s introduction said, “a version of the 1950s never seen in comics, on TV, and only rarely in the movies.” Finally, as stupid as this sounds, the actual coloring (rendered by Jacob Covey, a “Seattle-based graphic designer and purveyor of limited-color design”—well LA de frigging DA!) is, if you look at it a little while, really amazing as well. I mean, the guy only uses two colors of ink—red and black—but i can just leaf thru this book and

gaze at the way the things on the page are colored and i’m pretty visually satisfied (“are you reading that lurid *Pin-Up Art of Dan DeCarlo* book again?” “Well... yeah, but i only read it for the colors!”). I recommend this book strongly to anyone who thinks they might be interested in this sort of thing, and about half the people who think they aren’t (only drawback being price—\$18.95 for an 8” x 6” sized paperback might price a few folks out of the market, but it’s worth it, trust me). I had the pleasure of meeting Dan DeCarlo in 2000, the year before his death, and, by looking at him, i would not have guessed in a million years the guy was in his ‘80s. The moral is implicit: *Drawing half-nekkid chicks with big hooters is good for you! Draw some today!* IF YOU LIKED THIS, MIGHT I ALSO RECOMMEND: *Jack Cole and Plastic Man: Forms Stretched to Their Limits* by Art Spiegelman and Chip Kidd. —Rev. Nørb (Fantagraphics, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle WA 98115)

Underbelly: Additional Observations on the Beauty/Ugliness of Mostly Pillowgy Girls

by Dave Cooper

Some of you may be too young to remember, but once, long ago, the famous popstar/kabalist Madonna put out a slick coffee table book she called *Sex* and it was comprised almost entirely of naked pictures of her lithe self and her lithe friends in various lusty entanglements. Well, you know how when you float a few saltine crackers in your bowl of chicken noodle soup, the crackers slowly become bloated and soggy? I think a quick way of describing Dave Cooper’s collection of paintings entitled *Underbelly* would be to say that it’s a soggy cracker version of Madonna’s *Sex* book. Whereas Madonna’s book fetishizes the undressed glory the Hollywood Body Ideal forged by an expensive team of personal trainers and dieticians, Cooper’s book almost exclusively captures the nakedness of the female body pummeled into flabbiness by a barrage of processed foods and a sedentary lifestyle. The book is positively waddling with lush illustrations of these feral cherubim pawing at each other’s doughy folds while exploring their orthodontic fixations on one another. Simply put, human skin is being stretched every which way here; stretched not only around fatty deposits, but around bulging eyes and gaping mouths; in many of the paintings, succulent lips are being splayed open to reveal over-sized choppers and lycanthropic snarls. It might have been all the beer I was drinking when I sat down and soaked in all the marshmallowy goodness of this book, but I was struck by the notion that Cooper had somehow managed to destroy the dualistic nature of beauty and ugliness. These lumpy little nymphs are simultaneously ugly and, strangely, beautiful. I don’t know if *Underbelly* represents the warped fantasies of a chubby-chaser dentist or the nightmares of a man fearful of being eaten like a human Twinkie by some giggling “Plumpers,” but it is a comical, odd world where Dr. Seuss collides with Peter Paul Rubens (and I don’t mean Pee-Wee Herman—or do I?). It is a girdle-less place where all is unrestrained and traditional standards of beauty are revoked and it is definitely a jiggling, surrealistic romp that I thoroughly enjoyed. —Aphid Peewit (Fantagraphics, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115)



Burn to Shine: Washington D.C. 01.14.2004: DVD

THE CONCEPT: Take an abandoned house that's soon to be torched by the Washington, DC Fire Department for training purposes and have eight bands play one song each, with no audience other than the sound and visual crews. No overdubs, no snappy stage banter, just bands playing one song in an empty living room. **THE EXECUTION:** Before I start listing bands, I just want to say that the technical aspects of this DVD are superb. The light and sound levels are all totally equalized and crisp. There are up to five different cameras shooting per band. There's footage of the house before the bands enter and after the last band has left and the fire department has lit the place up. Overall, the technical quality is top-notch; Christoph Green directed the film, and his editing is precise and surgical and the film flows by smoothly. **THE PERFORMANCES:** Well, this is the bummer of the whole deal; the best director on earth would be hard-pressed to make this film more than passably interesting. The problem is, simply, that the majority of the music presented here is *so goddamn boring*. I was going to do a band-by-band review of everyone's performances, but after I got halfway through, I figured it would just be too cruel. So let me just say that the two standouts on this DVD were Ted Leo and Bob Mould and it seems noteworthy enough to mention that both of those gentlemen were the only ones who performed while armed only with their guitars and their voices. They were also the only two performers who played with anything resembling passion. At the other end of the spectrum were the abysmal French Toast, who were just two dudes replete with silly keyboard noodles and repetitive lyrics (and one of the worst band names on earth), and Weird War, who are members of the Make-up, were ridiculous-looking, and their song consisted of the Ben Stiller-lookalike singer repeatedly yowling "AK-forty sevuuuun!" *Over and over again*. Other bands that toed the line between the good and the awful were The Evens, Medications, Garland Of Hours And Q And Not U. **THE END RESULT:** The idea itself is brilliant, if nothing more than to illustrate how fragile a performer's foundation often is; you take away the audience's reciprocal energy, the stage lights, the volume, and you begin to realize just how frail and breakable music can seem. For that reason, it's a totally fascinating document. —Keith Rosson (Trixie, trixiedvd.com)



Circle Jerks: Live at the House of Blues: DVD

Just think: if there was such a thing as enforced retirement in our little youth-obsessed world of punk rock, the Circle Jerks might have sold off all their equipment by now and, instead of putting out a kick-ass DVD like this, they might be puttering around somewhere with their slacks hiked up to mid-chest, prattling on about the virtues of certain brands of lawn fertilizer or something. Whether this band is a rare case of neoteny or just garden variety Peter Pan Syndrome, it doesn't matter a whit to me when what we wind up with is something as good as *Live at the House of Blues*. Oh sure, maybe they're legs aren't as springy as they once were and maybe Keith Morris' bald spot is older than most of the kids they play for, but who really gives a fuck. There might not be a lot of hopping and show-boating, but this performance is packed to the gritted teeth with raw, heartfelt old school punk, like they used to do back before the candy-coated likes of Green Day and Blink 182 and Bowling for Soup. This is *pre-pre-fab* punk with all its claws out and it's just plain refreshing as all hell to see one of the most underrated bands in the genre kick out the jams so righteously. This DVD shows that the Circle Jerks are anything but ready to be put down and have jello and glue made out of their hoary remains. They still have plenty of piss and vinegar in their guts and we should all thank them for helping to keep punk from being the exclusive stomping grounds of snot-nosed adolescents; snot-nosed middle aged punks are welcome too, providing only that they can still "stomp." And the Circle Jerks can definitely still fucking stomp. —Aphid Peewit (Kung Fu, PO Box 38009, Hollywood, CA 90038)

Rockin' Bones Videozine Volume 3: DVD

Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy, oh boy, I thought... live shit! I forgot that live shit often means just that, since videotaping live shows almost invariably results in what can be called at best sub-standard sound quality. And therein lies the one major flaw with this video; most of the performances captured on this DVD suffer from poor sound, which kind of astounds me now that we're in the digital age. I willingly admit that I'm a technological idiot, but it seems reasonable to me that since this is a DVD and has presumably been digitally mastered for the format, couldn't some of the sound be filtered, at least a little bit? The segment on the Dwarves is buoyed only by the charmingly perverse interview with Blag Dahlia and three maids-in-waiting; the live shit (only one song, dammit!) is nearly unintelligible. It sounds like a brick building imploding. That's the worst example, however. While the sound may be a bit on the poor side, considering that it is a video fanzine, contextual expectations are not those that require pristine audio. So, to make a long story a bit longer, given the media genre that we're dealing with here, the sound is officially acceptable. Any deficiencies that I may have felt there are offset by fairly scintillating interview questions (e.g., to the Chop Sakis: "If in hell your punishment was to play in an '80s hair band for all eternity, what band would it be?"), and by the simple fact that there really are some electrifying performances here, most notably by the Chop Sakis, the Marked Men (good Christ, that's a good part), the Filthy Skanks, and the Voodoo Glow Skulls. All in all, I like this. Sure, the production may be a bit amateurish, but—given that context, the makers of this video do a fine job since the ultimate purpose here is to showcase some dandy rock'n'roll bands. Mission accomplished. The poor sound, the jerking camera, and the slathering intensity of some of these acts should serve as a reminder of why the live show still has ultimate precedence in the Rock'n'Roll Pantheon of Deeds. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Rockin' Bones Video, PO Box 133, Denton, TX, 76201; www.rockinbones.net)

The Spits: DVD

Oh man, exactly what you want from the oldest youngsters on Earth. Some sort of crappy public access episodes with dolls vomiting on records for reviews intercut with early Spits playing in a room, newer live gigs and "music videos" that are awesome. Todd Razorcake once told me that punk rock isn't hip anymore so only good bands call themselves punk now. Spits are that. They were the kids that got beat up but still kept starting the fights. Total genius. —Speedway Randy (www.thespits.com)


Troy Pride Productions and Novel Amusements DVDzine #4: DVD

Short videos in the vein of old school cassettes you would make as a kid with a handheld recorder and Radio Shack mic. Troy Pride is from Troy, NY, and is a couple of dudes making funny vids for fun. *Novel Amusements* has a variety of styles, comedy shorts, poems, animation. Homegrown video is essential to each town it comes from, but it's almost always better if you are already friends with the makers. —Speedway Randy (troyprideproductions.com, novelamusements.org)



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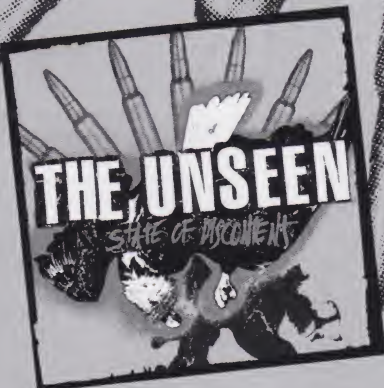
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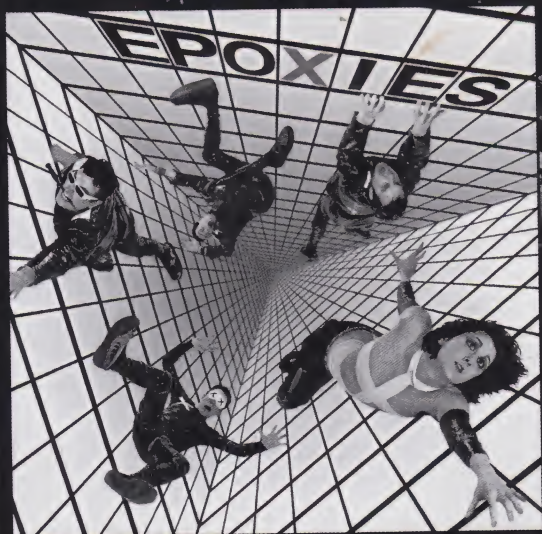
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